

THE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN IBERIAN WORLD • BRILL

Revisiting *Al-Andalus*

Perspectives on the Material Culture
of Islamic Iberia and Beyond

*Edited by Glaire D. Anderson
and Mariam Rosser-Owen*



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Revisiting *Al-Andalus*

The Medieval and Early Modern Iberian World

(formerly Medieval Iberian Peninsula)

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VOLUME 34

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INTRODUCTION

Glaire D. Anderson and Mariam Rosser-Owen

The present volume grew out of a desire to highlight the proliferation of Anglo-American scholarship which has developed during the decade and a half since the publication of the influential exhibition catalogue, *Al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain* (ed. Jerrilyn Dodds, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), and to address historiographical issues which that publication raised. The editors organized a double-panel for the 2002 meeting of the Middle Eastern Studies Association of North America (MESA), entitled “Al-Andalus: A Decade of New Research on the Art and Archaeology of Islamic Spain”. We aimed to bring together emerging and established scholars working on Andalusi material culture, and thereby to create a forum for the discussion of directions taken in the field since 1992. We were extremely fortunate that many of the original collaborators of *Al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain* supported our sessions and joined our discussions. They are thanked individually in the acknowledgements.¹

REVISITING *AL-ANDALUS*

1992 commemorated the 500th anniversary of the end of Islamic rule on the Iberian Peninsula. One of the most important events marking this occasion was the exhibition, *Al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain*, jointly organised and hosted by the Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. This was

¹ This volume is not a straight-forward publication of the papers that were presented as part of the MESA panel in 2002. Four papers were presented at the original panel which have not been published here: Francisco Prado-Vilar’s paper on the al-Mughīra pyxis was refined for the ivories symposium at the David Collection, and subsequently published in the proceedings, as “Enclosed in Ivory: The Miseducation of al-Mughīra”, *Journal of the David Collection* 2,1 (2005), pp. 139–163. Valérie Gonzalez spoke on the phenomenology of perception in the art of the Alhambra, which was subsequently published as “The Comares Hall in the Alhambra and James Turrell’s *Space That Sees*: A Comparison of Aesthetic Phenomenology”, *Muqarnas* 20 (2003), pp. 253–278. Sophie Makariou also spoke on the al-Mughīra pyxis, and Miriam Ali de Unzaga on the ‘Pendón de Las Navas de Tolosa’. We look forward to the publication of their work.

“the largest and most comprehensive exhibition ever held of Spanish Islamic art during its period of highest accomplishment”,² and brought together more than one hundred objects from nearly seventy institutions in fifteen countries. They were first exhibited within the palaces of the Alhambra itself, “providing an opportunity for many treasures to return to their place of origin for the first time in five hundred years”, and later in the halls of the Metropolitan Museum, to bring to the attention of the American public this “richly complex and relatively unknown civilization”.³

The catalogue, too, was the product of an international collaboration involving more than twenty scholars, coordinated by Jerrilynn Dodds, who was special consultant for the exhibition. The major impetus for both was the recognition that “[Spain’s] Islamic artistic heritage has not received a fraction of the attention it merits, as if we still believe, with Washington Irving, that ‘the Moslem empire in Spain was but a brilliant exotic that took no permanent root in the soil it embellished’”.⁴ The catalogue aimed to correct this omission. As Jerrilynn Dodds and Daniel Walker stated in their introduction,

The goal of this volume is to make a new place for the study of the art of Islamic Spain, to celebrate its value as part of an autonomous culture and also as a potent presence that had deep importance for Europe and the Muslim world...What we hope to offer here is a state of the question concerning the major achievements of art and architecture of al-Andalus, a volume that can serve both as an introduction to the visual world of a nearly vanished culture and as a point of departure for future scholarly study.⁵

The focus of the exhibition was inevitably the courtly arts, those objects which have been preserved through subsequent centuries of appreciation of their high aesthetic qualities. The catalogue aimed to set these into their “broader and richer cultural and historical context”, by including essays on a variety of aspects of the material culture of

² Quote from Mahrukh Tarapor’s “Acknowledgements”, p. ix, in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, exhibition catalogue, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1992).

³ Both quotes from Philippe de Montebello’s “Director’s foreword”, *Al-Andalus*, p. vii.

⁴ “Introduction”, *Al-Andalus*, p. xix. The reasons for the late emergence of the material culture of al-Andalus as a modern field of study in Anglo-American academia are comparable to the historiographical issues outlined for the field of Spanish late antiquity, in the introduction to *Hispania in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives*, ed. Kim Bowes and Michael Kulikowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

⁵ “Introduction”, *Al-Andalus*, p. xix.

al-Andalus, which “synthesize[d] traditional wisdom...with recent technical and formal studies, some of which are undertaken in the light of new methods”.⁶ “Diverse scholarly approaches” were brought to bear on the monuments of Madīnat al-Zahrā’ and the Alhambra, which combined archaeological studies with art historical and landscape analyses, to elucidate their truly multifaceted characters. It was hoped that the catalogue would be “not only a record of the exhibition but also serve as a pioneering reference for the future study of the art of Islamic Spain”.⁷

The catalogue certainly fulfilled these hopes, inspiring a new generation of Anglo-American scholarship; it still today provides an essential point of reference for those working in this field. Its publication in both English and Spanish implied a desire to create a dialogue between the emerging Anglo-American scholars, and the long and esteemed tradition of scholarship in this field in continental Europe. Together with *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* (ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Leiden: Brill, 1992), which appeared in the same year, it presented an alluring picture of Andalusī civilization to an English-language audience unaware of the European foundations upon which the volumes had been constructed.

STATE OF THE QUESTION

There is a long and important history of scholarship on al-Andalus especially in Spanish, French and German, most of it produced in recent years by scholars associated with the Escuela de Estudios Árabes in Granada, and the Casa de Velázquez and Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Madrid, institutions which have stood at the forefront of the scholarship on al-Andalus since the early twentieth century.

From the late eighteenth century, European (especially British) antiquarians, travellers and architects began to write on the art and architecture of al-Andalus, with studies proliferating in the nineteenth century.⁸ Numerous nineteenth-century works were devoted to the Alhambra.⁹

⁶ “Introduction”, *Al-Andalus*, p. xxi.

⁷ “Acknowledgements”, *Al-Andalus*, p. x.

⁸ See Manuel Acín Almansa, “Arquitectura andalusí y arqueología: el estado de la cuestión”, *Arquitectura en al-Andalus: Documentos para el siglo XXI* (Granada: El Legado Andalusí, 1996), pp. 58.

⁹ For example, Girault de Prangey, *Souvenirs de Grenade et de l’Alhambra: Monuments*

The earliest study is probably that by British antiquarian Francis Carter, *A Journey from Gibraltar to Malaga* (1777), followed by the publication of the *Antigüedades Árabes de España* (1780) by the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, in Madrid, and later *Voyage pittoresque et historique de l'Espagne*, written by the French archaeologist Alexandre Laborde between 1806 and 1820. At about the same time the Irish architect and antiquarian James Cavanah Murphy (d. 1814) developed an abiding interest in Andalusí architecture during the seven years for which he lived and worked as a diplomat in Cadiz, between 1802 and 1809. His drawings of the monuments of Córdoba, Granada and Seville, were published in 1813–16 as *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain*. In 1832, French photographer Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey, known for his daguerrotypes of ancient Mediterranean sites, published *Souvenirs de Grenade et de l'Alhambra: Monuments Arabes et Moresques de Cordoue, Séville et Grenade*. The British writer Nathaniel Armstrong Wells, son of a wealthy West Indian plantation owner, wrote, among other works, the *Picturesque Antiquities of Spain*, in 1846.

While travel accounts and antiquarianism dominate works written about Spain in the first half of the nineteenth century, by its last decades an approach informed by art history is discernible. The German poet and literary historian Adolf Friedrich von Schack, for instance, offered an introduction to Andalusí art and social history in *Poesie und Kunst der Araber in Spanien und Sicilien* (1865). The Spanish architect and restorer Rafael Contreras (d. 1890)—who was appointed “restaurador adornista” of the Alhambra in 1847, succeeding his father José who had served there as architect since 1828—published *Del Arte Árabe en España, Manifestado en Granada, Sevilla y Córdoba*, in 1875.

The English traveller and author Albert Frederick Calvert (d. 1946) bridged this historiographical shift. A mining engineer by trade, Calvert is best known for his colourful career as a traveller in Australia, about which he wrote prolifically.¹⁰ By 1924, Calvert had written thirty-six books about Spain and Spanish art, among them *Moorish Remains in Spain: Being a Brief Record of the Arabian Conquest of the Peninsula* (1906), for which he earned knighthood in the Orders of Alfonso XII and Isabella la Católica. Though works in English by Calvert, August Meyer, and

Arabes et Moresques de Cordoue, Séville et Grenade (Paris, 1837), and Ferry's contribution in this volume.

¹⁰ Wendy Birman, “Calvert, Albert Frederick (1872–1946)”, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 7, Melbourne University Press, 1979, pp. 528–529.

Georgiana King appeared in the first half of the twentieth century,¹¹ the French expansion into North Africa after 1878 probably initiated the decline of British writing on al-Andalus, and the ascendancy of French, Spanish and German art historical scholarship.

The establishment of government research institutions in Madrid and Granada in the early twentieth century marks the beginning of the institutionalization of art historical scholarship on al-Andalus in Spain. For example, the establishment of the Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas (known as the JAE) by the Spanish government in 1907, was followed shortly afterward by the creation of the University of Bordeaux's École des Hautes Études Hispaniques, which from 1909 was known as the Casa de Velázquez. In 1910, the foundation in Granada of the Centro de Estudios Históricos de Granada y su Reino, followed by the Escuela de Madrid (which published the influential journal *Al-Andalus*) would set the stage for the foundation in 1932 of the Escuela de Estudios Árabes in Granada, partly dedicated to 'Arab' art and archaeology.

During the turbulent years between 1936 and 1945, encompassing the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and World War II (1939–1945), the institutional study of Andalusí art, architecture and archaeology took on its present form. In 1938, Franco dismantled the JAE in Madrid, replacing it, nearly three months after the start of World War II, with the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), now the Spanish government's largest research institution. In 1940, the Casa de Velázquez was re-established in Madrid, its premises having been destroyed in 1936 during the Civil War. Soon after, the German government established the Madrid branch of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut. These three institutions today operate as the main international centres of scholarship on the material culture of al-Andalus.

Between 1950 and 1970, the key Spanish scholars were the architect Leopoldo Torres Balbás, who succeeded Contreras as the restorer of the Alhambra, and wrote his seminal *Arte Almohade, Arte Nazarí, Arte Mudéjar* in 1949; art historian Manuel Gómez-Moreno (*Arte Árabe Español*

¹¹ The works in English include Albert Frederick Calvert, *Moorish Remains in Spain: Being a Brief Record of the Arabian Conquest of the Peninsula* (London, New York: J. Lane, 1906); August L. Mayer, *Architecture and Applied Arts in Old Spain* (New York: Brentano's, 1921); Georgiana Goddard King, *Mudéjar*, Bryn Mawr Notes and Monographs, VIII (Bryn Mawr, Pa., Bryn Mawr College; London, New York etc. Longmans: Green and Co., 1927).

hasta los Almohades; *Arte Mozárabe*, 1951), and epigraphist Manuel Ocaña Jiménez (*El Cúfico Hispano y su Evolución*, 1970). In France, the key figures were Georges Marçais (*L'Architecture Musulmane d'Occident: Tunisie, Algérie, Maroc, Espagne et Sicile*, 1954), Henri Terrasse (1895–1971),¹² and the Arabist Évariste Lévi-Provençal (1896–1956), who was arguably the most important twentieth-century historian of al-Andalus: his *Inscriptions Arabes d'Espagne* (1931) and *Histoire de l'Espagne Musulmane* (1950), among many other historical studies and textual editions, remain fundamental works in the field.¹³

While studies on the material culture of Islamic Iberia up to the 1950s mainly followed antiquarian or traditional art-historical methodologies, works appearing in the subsequent decades reveal the increasing importance of disciplines outside art history—particularly the historical and social sciences—to the study of Andalusī material culture. Since the 1980s such scholarship is particularly associated with the Casa de Velázquez, CSIC/Escuela de Estudios Árabes, the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI), and the Conjunto Arqueológico de Madīnat al-Zahrā'.

The Casa de Velázquez's regular publications include the journal *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, and conference proceedings from their many congresses.¹⁴ Pierre Guichard, Patrice Cressier, André Bazzana, Miquel Barceló, and Manuel Acien Almansa are among the key figures associated with this institution, whose archaeological and interdisciplinary approaches to the rural sphere has profoundly changed our understanding of the medieval Andalusī past.¹⁵ CSIC publishes the

¹² See Nadia Erzini, *Grove Dictionary of Art*, s.v. "Terrasse, Henri"; for bibliography see Henri Laoust, "Notice sur la vie et les travaux de Henri Terrasse", *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 1981), pp. 133–50.

¹³ See David J. Wasserstein, "Évariste Lévi-Provençal", *The Jewish Discovery of Islam: Studies in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, ed. Martin Kramer (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1999), pp. 273–90.

¹⁴ Especially the Castrum, Villa and CICMMO congresses. Recent Castrum volumes include, for example, Jean-Marie Martin, ed. *Zones côtières littorales dans le monde méditerranéen au Moyen Âge: défense, peuplement, mise en valeur* (2001); and André Bazzana and Étienne Hubert, eds. *Maisons et espaces domestiques dans le monde méditerranéen au Moyen Âge* (2000); André Bazzana, ed. *Archéologie des espaces agraires méditerranéens au Moyen Âge* (1999); Jean-Michel Poisson, ed., *Frontière et peuplement dans le monde méditerranéen au Moyen Âge* (1992); André Bazzana, ed., *Guerre, fortification et habitat dans le monde méditerranéen au moyen âge* (1988); Ghislaine Noyé, ed., *Structures de l'habitat et occupation du sol dans les pays méditerranéens: les méthodes et l'apport de l'archéologie extensive* (1988); André Bazzana, Pierre Guichard and Jean-Michel Poisson, eds., *Habitats fortifiés et organisation de l'espace en Méditerranée médiévale* (Lyon: GIS Maison de l'Orient, 1983).

¹⁵ In addition to edited works included in preceding notes, see for example Pierre

bi-annual journal *Al-Qanṭara*, which continues and replaces the original journal *Al-Andalus*; the *Estudios Árabes e Islámicos* series (currently numbering eleven volumes), and the *Estudios Onomástico-biográficos de al-Andalus* series (currently at fourteen volumes). Fertile exchange between the Arabists Manuela Marín and Maribel Fierro of the CSIC and scholars associated with the Casa de Velázquez has resulted in important joint volumes.¹⁶ Scholars associated with the Escuela de Estudios Árabes (especially Antonio Almagro, Julio Navarro and Antonio Orihuela) have published numerous works on Andalusí architecture and urbanism, while the Conjunto Arqueológico de Madīnat al-Zahrā', directed by Antonio Vallejo Triano, has published prolifically on the site. With the support of the Junta de Andalucía, they issue the journal *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrā'* (published since 1987), while the Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife has published the annual *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* since 1965.

The DAI publishes the journal *Madriider Mitteilungen* (currently comprising 41 volumes), as well as the series *Madriider Beiträge* (currently 19 volumes) and *Madriider Forschungen*. The late and much-lamented Christian Ewert (d. 2006) was for many years the key figure at the DAI, and is known particularly for his work on North African mosques, the Aljafería palace, and architectural ornament.¹⁷ The recent volume edited by Martina Müller-Wiener et al., entitled *Al-Andalus und Europa: Zwischen Orient und Okzident* (Düsseldorf: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2004) honoured his many contributions to the field of Andalusí material culture, and illustrates the interdisciplinary and international character of his former students' scholarship.

In contrast to the wealth of material produced by these institutions, contributions from scholars based in the United Kingdom and United States constitute a comparatively recent historiographical phenomenon,

Guichard, *La España Musulmana. Al-Andalus Omeya (s. VIII–XI)* (1995); *ibid.*, *Les Musulmans de Valence et la Reconquête: XI^{ème}–XIII^{ème} siècles* (1991); *ibid.*, *Los campesinos de al-Andalus* (1989); Miquel Barceló, Helena Kirchner and Carmen Navarro, *El Agua Que No Duerme: Fundamentos de la arqueología hidráulica andalusí* (1995); Manuel Ación and Maria Paz Torres, eds., *Estudios sobre cementerios islámicos andalusíes* (1995).

¹⁶ Recent joint publications include Patrice Cressier, Mercedes García-Arenal and Mohamed Méouak, eds., *Genèse de la ville islamique en al-Andalus et au Maghreb occidental* (1998); Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro and Jean-Pierre van Staëvel, eds., *L'urbanisme dans l'Occident Musulman au Moyen Âge: Aspects Juridiques* (2000); Maribel Fierro, Patrice Cressier and Luis Molina, eds., *Los Almohades: Problemas y Perspectivas* (2005).

¹⁷ For example, see Christian Ewert, *Die Dekorelemente der Wandfelder im Reichen Saal von Madīnat az-Zahrā'* (Mainz, 1996); Christian Ewert and Jens-Peter Wisshak, *Forschungen zur almohadischen Moschee* (Mainz, 1981).

and an outgrowth of the rise of Islamic art history as an academic field. Various scholars—principally Oleg Grabar, Renata Holod and the academic family which grew up under their tutelage—have treated Andalusí themes within the context of their wider specialisms. The catalogue *Al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain*, marks the moment of catalyst for the formation of a specialist discipline of Andalusí material culture within the Anglophone world. Since 1992, however, scholarship on the material culture of Islamic Iberia has advanced dramatically, thanks to the prolific work of Spanish, Portuguese, French, German and Italian scholars in the fields of archaeology, urbanism, architectural study, the recording and classification of epigraphic and numismatic evidence, the translation and commentaries of key primary texts, among many others. In addition to uncovering new evidence, new methodologies have developed, which are increasingly interdisciplinary in nature, and new scientific analysis techniques are being applied, with results that could not even be imagined in 1992.

Recent publications in English in this field have focused on a single object or group of objects: for example, *The Minbar from the Kutubiyya Mosque*, ed. Jonathan Bloom (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), contains essays discussing aspects of the minbar's artistic and historical significance, its structure and decorative scheme, and its recent restoration, a project stimulated by the inclusion of this iconic object in the *Al-Andalus* exhibition. The recent double volume of the *Journal of the David Collection* (vol. 2, 2005) presents a range of essays focused on the study of Andalusí ivories, which developed out of the symposium "The Ivories of Muslim Spain: An International Colloquium at The David Collection, Copenhagen", 18–20 November 2003. Important interdisciplinary monographs on Andalusí palace culture and landscape, by D. F. Ruggles (*Gardens, Landscape and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000) and Cynthia Robinson (*In Praise of Song: the Making of Courtly Culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1005–1134 A.D.*, Leiden: Brill, 2002) have also appeared.

These scholars are now leading the way in Anglo-American scholarship through conferences and collections, such as *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Castile*, ed. Cynthia Robinson and Leyla Rouhi (Leiden: Brill, 2005), and *Interrogating Iberian Frontiers*, published as a special supplement of *Medieval Encounters* vol. 12/3 (2006), and guest-edited by María Judith Feliciano, Leyla Rouhi and Cynthia Robinson. These collections address many issues around a single, developing theme within Andalusí studies, but there has been

no English-language publication in the last decade comparable to those regularly produced by European scholars, which address a wide range of issues in order to showcase new perspectives and methodologies that are reshaping the study of Andalusī material culture.

Exhibitions staged since 1992 (principally *Les Andalousies de Damas à Cordoue* at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, 28 November 2000–15 April 2001, and *El Esplendor de los Omeyas Cordobeses: la Civilización Musulmana de Europa Occidental* at the Conjunto Arqueológico de Madīnat al-Zahrā', 3 May–30 September 2001—essentially two legs of the same exhibition) have given a wider public, and those who had not attended *Al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain*, the opportunity to see many of the objects which were exhibited there, together with some which had not, as well as showing objects which had come to light since 1992. The main contribution of these exhibitions was to place greater emphasis on the Syrian Umayyad ancestry of Andalusī material culture. Their accompanying catalogues followed the 1992 model of including object entries alongside thematic essays—a substantial supplementary volume in the case of *El Esplendor de los Omeyas Cordobeses*—which brought local scholars together to summarise (in French and Spanish) the work they had accomplished to date on a wide range of subjects.

The exhibition *Caliphs and Kings: the Art and Influence of Islamic Spain* (at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C., 8 May–17 October 2004) used the masterpieces in the collection of the Hispanic Society of America, New York, to tell the story of the legacy of Andalusī art in Spain, and how it inspired what is finally becoming recognised as a subject of scholarly discourse in its own right—Mudéjar art and culture. The catalogue includes an important essay on the continued influence of Islamic Spain beyond the scope of the exhibition, and the romantic receptions of al-Andalus into the nineteenth century.

AIMS AND SCOPE

The essays in the present volume address issues of material culture across a broad geographical and chronological range. In addition to the period between the eighth and fifteenth centuries, when al-Andalus existed as a political entity, studies of later places and times for which the art of al-Andalus was significant are also included. The essays are interdisciplinary and contextualizing in approach, and each highlights

the ways in which the author has led, or responded to, the changing approaches that have recently taken root within the field. The editors are happy to be able to include work by some of the original contributors to *Al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain* (Julio Navarro Palazón, Cynthia Robinson and Antonio Vallejo Triano). The articles are ordered chronologically, under broad thematic headings. Together, they explore the relationship between the Andalusí landscape, urbanism, and court culture; literature and art; domestic architecture in the context of dramatic social change; archaeology as a tool for analyzing medieval urbanism and domestic architecture; explorations of cultural transfer from the Iberian Peninsula to the New World; the ‘rediscovery’ of al-Andalus in the nineteenth century; and modern architectural attempts to construct an Andalusí cultural identity. Priority is placed on written sources—literary, especially poetic, historical, and documentary—as a crucial context for understanding art and architecture, its meanings or significance, to their patrons, intended audiences or consumers (see the articles by Anderson, Rosser-Owen, Robinson, Feliciano).

From the earliest stages of this project, the editors considered it important that archaeology have a strong presence in the volume. In a conference on the Islamic Art Survey Book, convened at Harvard University on 17 and 18 May 2002, Oleg Grabar asked whether the wealth of new archaeological data currently emerging from Spain was relevant to historians of Islamic art. The question was an important one, because it forced Islamicists to consider the kinds of approach that authors should take in writing introductory texts on Islamic art. In the minds of the editors, the answer to Grabar’s question is a resounding yes. Excavations conducted during recent decades are providing important new information relevant to the concerns of historians, not only of al-Andalus, but of medieval Iberia as a whole, and of the medieval Islamic lands more generally. In addition to presenting a snapshot of current British and American studies of Andalusí material culture, the volume therefore includes contributions by Spanish colleagues from the Conjunto Arqueológico de Madīnat al-Zahrā’, the Escuela de Estudios Árabes, and the Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife. In the wake of the conspicuous absence of al-Andalus from the symposium “Islamic Cities in the Classical Age”, held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on 6 and 7 May 2005, it is our hope that historians of other regions of the medieval Islamic world will discover useful comparative material in the contributions on Andalusí domestic architecture (Vallejo, Almagro, Orihuela) and urbanism (Navarro and Jiménez).

Architecture, urbanism, court culture, economies, and patterns of consumption are but a few lines of enquiry which can benefit from this new data. Archaeological excavations are now providing the information which historians require to clarify the relationship between Iberia's Roman substrate, and the architecture and infrastructure of the Umayyad period (Anderson, Vallejo). These articles demonstrate the mutually-fruitful results of considering archaeology and historical texts as equally valid and complementary forms of evidence. Traditionally, archaeology in Spain (as elsewhere) has followed a "monument-centred methodology", in which "one dug to verify histories described in texts, and archaeological materials were inserted into interpretative frameworks predetermined by textually-driven research agendas and textually-determined results".¹⁸ This situation was drastically altered in the 1980s by the archaeological revolution spearheaded by Pierre Guichard and other Casa de Velázquez scholars, which shifted attention away from such text-centred approaches towards theoretical analysis based on insights into settlement patterns and social structure derived from rural archaeology.¹⁹

Similar debates, about the relationship between history and archaeology, currently being explored within the field of Spanish late antiquity, point to another interdisciplinary way in which Andalusi studies might develop. There is no need for Hispanic studies to remain within the compartments into which the history of the Iberian Peninsula has traditionally been divided. Indeed, archaeological evidence is critically important for historians precisely because it can illuminate issues about which texts say little or nothing. Vallejo's contribution in this volume, for example, shows that Madīnat al-Zahrā' was not the result of continuous building projects, as the texts indicate, but that within a decade of its foundation, 'Abd al-Raḥmān III was radically remodelling the site in response to imported Abbasid models of representing royal power. In addition, the articles by Almagro, Anderson, Navarro and Jiménez, Vegas and Mileto, and Bridgman, likewise employ archaeological evidence to shed light on issues for which textual evidence has been of little use.

¹⁸ Introduction to *Hispania in Late Antiquity*, p. 10.

¹⁹ For an overview of the historiographical issues, see the preface to Thomas F. Glick's *From Muslim Fortress to Christian Castle: Social and Cultural Change in Medieval Spain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. xi–xxi. See also Miquel Barceló, "Historia y Arqueología", *Al-Qanṭara* 13, no. 2 (1992) pp. 457–62.

Scientific analysis shows how new methodologies within archaeology can also bring results which could not even be imagined a few decades ago: for instance, Bridgman applies the technique of ceramic petrology to the study of Almohad ceramics to elucidate the movement of low-status ceramic fabrics through processes of trade and exchange; Vegas and Mileto show how stratigraphical analysis can be applied to architecture (“vertical archaeology”), in this case to show the processes of transformation of a section of the Alhambra, from Nasrid to ‘Catholic’ use. Similarly, the development of new technologies has allowed archaeologists to visualize their discoveries in highly innovative ways, so that “we may enjoy and contemplate the architecture of the past using a tool of the future” (Almagro). Again, such studies show that bridging the disciplinary boundary between historians who rely primarily on textual evidence and those who privilege material culture offers rewarding possibilities for future research.

Several of the essays in this volume contribute a more nuanced understanding of socio-historical concerns. For example, the political importance of the *ḥājib* (‘chamberlain’, later ‘regent’; Vallejo, Rosser-Owen, Robinson) and of the *ṣaḡālība* (a court elite comprised of former slaves; Anderson, Vallejo), and their role as patrons in shaping the processes of Andalusī material culture. The importance of these groups had all but been ignored until recent studies.²⁰ These contributions show that the field is moving away from an overly-simplistic understanding of Andalusī art as an homogeneous culture driven by caliphal patronage, or of the Umayyad period as a ‘Golden Age’, and exclusive focus of scholarship. It is hoped that the way in which the Umayyad period is dealt with in this volume elucidates the deepening complexity and interest of the era.

The articles by both Bridgman and Feliciano show that traditional stylistic criteria alone in the study of Andalusī or New World ceramics are not enough if we want to understand these objects as indicators of social history, and that scholars need also to consider the external forces that operate on the movement of these ceramics, and on their consumers. These articles use very different approaches (scientific analysis, and archival sources) to illustrate similar perspectives on advances in the field of ceramic studies. Both essays point to the importance of Seville:

²⁰ See also the recent study by Virgilio Martínez Enamorado, *Un hombre para el califato: de nuevo sobre Yāfar el Eslavo a partir de un cimacio con grifos* (Málaga: N.p., 2006).

Bridgman shows its importance as a capital and pottery-producing centre, implying the rich economy of the Almohad period, a period which has been largely ignored in Andalusī scholarship, because of the sparse and archaeological nature of the material evidence. Feliciano also shows Seville's importance as a pottery-producing and exporting centre, not just as the "gateway to the Americas".

The present volume also extends the chronological scope of studies of al-Andalus, by the breadth of its coverage of the post-Umayyad period, and especially by including contributions on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ferry's essay on Owen Jones and the Alhambra Court at the Crystal Palace highlights the awakening interest, across the field of Islamic art, in the nineteenth century as a field of academic enquiry. This contribution does not put the Alhambra back under "the romantic gaze of the west", from which Dodds and Walker were keen to remove it in *Al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain*,²¹ rather, it demonstrates Jones' sincere and scholarly appreciation of the Alhambra palaces as masterpieces of architecture, through his tireless efforts to recreate them in microcosm in Victorian London, and thereby contribute to his larger goal of reinvigorating British art and design. Roberson's work applies more anthropological approaches to the study of modern Islam in Spain, and the differing responses which the Spanish Muslims of today have to the cultural legacies left by Iberian Muslims of the past. This shows that the "Legacy of Islam in Spain", discussed in Juan Vernet's chapter in *Al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain*, is not only historical, but has a vibrant modern life on the Iberian Peninsula.

If there is one unifying theme to the essays collected in this volume, it is surely the way that artefacts or architecture are used or manipulated to reflect the wishes/tastes/political messages of its consumers, be they the caliph (Vallejo), his *ḥājib* (Rosser-Owen, Robinson), the court elite (Anderson), or people buying or trading in relatively low-class ceramic wares (Bridgman, Feliciano), the adaptation of an Islamic building to suit the needs of a different culture (Vegas and Mileto), or the responses to an historical culture by members of a modern one (Ferry, Roberson). These essays reveal art and architecture to be the instruments of social change and indicators of social conditions.

However, this volume is by no means comprehensive in its coverage. The arts of al-Andalus include objects and buildings of all types from

²¹ "Introduction", *Al-Andalus*, p. xxii.

over seven hundred years of history: the editors have therefore been highly selective in choosing which studies to include. Our volume does not implicitly exclude the excellent work of the many scholars working on Andalusi material culture in continental Europe. We have not, for example, directly addressed the subject of numismatics,²² or epigraphy, an aspect of material culture which has traditionally been treated almost as a separate discipline, “at the frontier between traditional literary sources and the archaeological evidence”;²³ rather, it is presupposed that the evidence provided by texts of all kinds has been considered on the same level as the internal evidence of artistic motifs or archaeological processes. Important recording of Andalusi historical inscriptions is being conducted in Spain, principally by Juan Souto of the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, to bring the work of Lévi-Provençal (*Inscriptions Arabes d’Espagne*, Leiden: Brill, 1931) up to date with archaeological discoveries. The many thousands of epigraphic fragments held in the storerooms of provincial Spanish museums, and the Quranic inscriptions on Andalusi architecture, are gradually being deciphered by scholars such as María Antonia Martínez Núñez and Carmen Barceló, though there is much more work to be done by future scholars.²⁴

There is an emphasis in this volume on the secular arts, which reflects the interests of the editors as much as the emphases of current archaeological investigation. Religion as a focus of art and architecture is addressed directly in only one contribution (Roberson). This is not to say that we do not consider religious art and architecture to be as valid or interesting, but perhaps ‘religious studies’ *per se* should not be seen as a *sine qua non* of any publication on Andalusi material culture. While religion has long been a traditional focus of studies of al-Andalus, and remains a preoccupation of social historians of medieval Iberia, we have not emphasised here issues of cultural interchange, or the notion of ‘convivencia’, the supposedly harmonious co-existence

²² On which now see the monographic section in the second fascicle of *Al-Qanṭara* 27 (2006), edited by Salvador Peña and Miguel Vega, two scholars whose work is producing a new understanding of the political, religious and cultural context of the coins minted in al-Andalus.

²³ Introduction to *Hispania in Late Antiquity*, p. 18.

²⁴ See, for example, María Antonia Martínez Núñez, “Sentido de la epigrafía omeya de al-Andalus”, *El esplendor de los Omeyas cordobeses: la civilización musulmana de Europa Occidental* (Granada: El Legado Andalusi, 2001), pp. 408–417; or Carmen Barceló, “Poesía y epigrafía. Epitafios islámicos con elegía, desde Suakin a Almería”, *Anaquel de Estudios Arabes* 11 (2000), pp. 123–144.

between Muslims, Jews and Christians within the Iberian Peninsula. We have not been guided by a stereotyped view of what it was to live in al-Andalus, but have aimed through these essays to move towards a greater understanding of the people who commissioned and consumed art, be they royalty, nobility, or a more domestic market. We recognise that labels such as ‘Christian’, ‘Muslim’ and ‘Jew’ are simplistic when applied to people who lived in a cultural melting-pot, but also appreciate that religion was a significant part of a person’s identity in the medieval period, and that these labels therefore have some currency. We need to be aware of sensitivities, however, when these labels start to relate to ethnicity, and that ‘Muslim’ or ‘Jew’ is not seen as implicitly foreign, and ‘Christian’ as indigenous.

We have avoided in this volume what might be perceived as the ‘obvious’ treatment: for example, the Nasrid period has been approached through the way in which the Alhambra changed under Christian use (Vegas and Mileto), or through its rediscovery in the nineteenth century (Ferry). Similarly, we have not addressed the concept of Mudéjar on the Iberian Peninsula itself, but have chosen to represent this new discourse through the context of Spanish colonialism (Feliciano). As mentioned above, many scholars are currently working in this area, and producing dedicated publications on different aspects of what Mudéjar was and how it worked. Instead, we have chosen to highlight an area of this discourse that was characterized by the interdisciplinary approach which unifies the volume, and which expands the subject of Andalusī material culture beyond the traditional boundaries of the Iberian Peninsula.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The gaps in our volume might point the way forward for future generations of scholars. The amirate, for example, is still a period awaiting clarification. Exploring the exact nature of the relations between the Spanish Umayyads and the Fatimids has potentially interesting results, especially for the ways in which it would open up the study of North Africa and the Berber tribes who were variously allied with one or the other of these dynasties, for ideological as well as pragmatic reasons.²⁵

²⁵ See the recent work in this area by Maribel Fierro, such as “Madīnat al-Zahrā’: el Paraíso y los fatimíes”, *Al-Qanṭara* 25 (2004), pp. 299–327; or “Espacio sunnī y espacio šī’ī”, in *El esplendor de los omeyas cordobeses*, pp. 168–177.

Andalusi studies are pointing increasingly towards Morocco and its relations with al-Andalus, not so much on the Iberian Peninsula as within Morocco itself, and the ways in which Andalusí material culture might have influenced or been ‘continued’ in Morocco, or even how the influence might have functioned in the other direction. Recent studies on the relations between the Nasrids and Merinids, and the possible impact of those relations on the architectural models employed at the Alhambra, point to another phase of contact between al-Andalus and Morocco.²⁶ The exploration of the relationship between the Nasrids and the Mamluks is another potential new direction,²⁷ as are the influences of Andalusí art and itinerant artists on Egyptian architecture of an earlier period, seen, for example, in the additions to the Ibn Ṭūlūn Mosque, and the ‘Andalusí aesthetic’ in Mamluk architecture of the thirteenth century. Dodds and Walker pointed to this in 1992, as well as the “evidence of communication” between Nasrid and Ottoman artistic traditions during the last days of al-Andalus:²⁸ both subjects still await elucidation.

The essays in the present volume illustrate how the study of Andalusí material culture is shifting away from traditional taxonomic approaches, which have tended to consider the art of this period in terms of simple classification (tracing the artistic genealogy of this or that motif), and towards a more critical understanding of *why* a particular motif, or aesthetic, or building type, is employed. The logical conclusion of this anti-taxonomic shift would be to keep expanding the field of Andalusí studies until there was no need for volumes of collected essays such as this one. Hispanic studies as a whole are beginning to open up in more cross-disciplinary ways, so that scholars who work on the traditionally-separate geographical constructs of Christian and Islamic Iberia are beginning to come together.²⁹ These tentative first steps are currently

²⁶ See Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, “El Palacio de los Leones de la Alhambra: ¿*Madrasa*, *zāwiya* y tumba de Muhammad V? Estudio para un debate”, *Al-Qanṭara* 22 (2001), pp. 77–120.

²⁷ See the articles published in *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* 40 (2004), on the so-called ‘Generalife carpet’, an enormous Mamluk carpet which may have been commissioned by the Nasrids from Mamluk weavers, or perhaps given as a diplomatic gift during an embassy such as the one sent from Granada to Cairo in 1440; it seems to fit exactly the upper level of the Generalife palace, on the northern side of the so-called Patio de la Acequia.

²⁸ “Introduction”, *Al-Andalus*, p. xxii.

²⁹ See Robinson and Rouhi, *Under the Influence*. A study day, “Friends and Foes: the Art of Christian and Islamic Spain”, was held at the Courtauld Institute in London, on 17

limited to discussing how the two cultures interrelated, but issues of ‘influence’ or religious polemic need not be the only motivations for shared studies. Ultimately, the fields should merge together, be considered on an equal footing, and published in truly cross-‘cultural’ collected volumes. That day is probably still some way off, as the ‘disciplines’ of Christian Spain and Islamic Spain, not to mention text-based versus art-based approaches, have been separate for so long, that neither seems quite ready to fully take the plunge. And while historians of art and architecture recognise the relevance of texts to their historical enquiries, the editors express the hope that historians who rely solely on texts will begin to acknowledge that material evidence can be as valid and useful in aiding our understanding of the past, particularly regarding questions for which there simply is little or no textual evidence. Effort by historians on all sides of the traditional disciplinary divisions would help to stimulate new directions in the field of medieval Iberian studies.

For now, we should concentrate on questioning traditional paradigms. It is interesting that in the introduction to *Al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain*, it was necessary to define ‘Mudéjar’, and the understanding of this concept was still quite limited: “by the sixteenth century, the [Mudéjar arts] were perceived as belonging both to Islamic tradition and to diverse groups of users and makers, as part of the shared culture of Christians, Jews and Muslims”,³⁰ while studies since 1992 (including the contribution by Feliciano in this volume) have shown that Mudéjar came to signify Iberian-ness, not other-ness. Similarly, the paradigm of appropriation and/or triumphalism that was current in Andalusí studies in the 1990s has been re-evaluated: for example, we no longer believe that Pedro I simplistically “appropriated the very architecture of the Alhambra” for his palace at Seville,³¹ or that his vizier Samuel ha-Levi did the same for his synagogue in Toledo, because we now understand more about the extensive, peace-time contacts between al-Andalus and her non-Muslim neighbours. Likewise, it is no longer sufficient to view the rededication of Andalusí ivories and luxury objects in church and cathedral treasuries as mere triumphalism,³² as we now know more

June 2005. A new series of Colloquia on the Cultures of Christian and Islamic Iberia was initiated by Juan Carlos Bayo at the University of Exeter in September 2006.

³⁰ “Introduction”, *Al-Andalus*, p. xxii.

³¹ “Introduction”, *Al-Andalus*, p. xxii.

³² As, for example, in Julie Harris’ article on the Pamplona casket, “Muslim Ivories in Christian Hands: the Leire Casket in context”, *Art History* 18/2 (June 1995), pp. 213–221.

about instances of gift exchange between Christian and Muslim kings and regents. Another paradigm, which is only now being questioned, relates to the “seduction of the ascetic Almoravids by the most opulent crafts of al-Andalus”,³³ which stems from a pseudo-Orientalist assumption of the rude Berber tribesman finding civilisation in Europe. All these examples show how subjects within the field of Andalusí studies are becoming increasingly nuanced through an application of interdisciplinary and anti-taxonomic approaches.

Other shifts in the field are more semantic: increasingly we refer to ‘Islamic Iberia’ rather than ‘Islamic Spain’, since al-Andalus covered a broader geographical area than the modern political entity of Spain, which itself came about through the conquest and subsequent expulsion of the Peninsula’s non-Christian inhabitants. However, moving from ‘Spain’ to ‘Iberia’ recognises that modern Portugal was also part of al-Andalus—as Bridgman’s essay in this volume shows, Mértola (now in Portugal) was as much part of Seville’s economic hinterland as Écija (now in Spain). We reject notions and terms such as ‘Reconquista’ and ‘Moor’/‘Moorish’, which imply an historiographical model of the Arab invaders as ‘landlords’ of the Iberian Peninsula, who for seven hundred years remained aloof from it, built monuments which then remained behind as the only traces of their presence, when indigenous Christianity finally reasserted itself and drove them from its land. Recent scholarship shows these to be overly-simplistic notions, a hangover from the ideology which drove the conquests of Ferdinand and Isabella in the fifteenth century. Unfortunately, the vocabulary remains, and by rejecting such terms we express a hope that both popular and academic discourse will move away from them definitively. ‘Moorish’ is redefined here as a concept which was meaningful to nineteenth-century designers and architects, as a European form of art or architecture which was inspired by the Islamic aesthetics of al-Andalus.

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The editors extend their thanks to the contributors, for patience over a long gestation period, and willingness to make the changes we asked for, often at short notice, always with good humour. To those who sup-

³³ “Introduction”, *Al-Andalus*, p. xx.

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Map of the Iberian Peninsula showing the locations mentioned in this volume.

PART I

ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM IN
UMAYYAD CÓRDOBA

MADĪNAT AL-ZAHRĀ': TRANSFORMATION OF A CALIPHAL CITY

*Antonio Vallejo Triano**

The works undertaken at Madīnat al-Zahrā' since 1985 have significantly advanced our knowledge of the city founded by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III in the second half of the tenth century, and come after a long journey of investigation, which was begun with the first excavations of the site in 1911.¹ This new contribution has not been motivated by an extension of the excavations of the palace, which covers basically the same area as established during the work of the 1980s. It is well-known that this zone corresponds to the central sector of the palace, and that its surface area reaches approximately 10 hectares, out of the total of 112 hectares which the city once covered. In this sector are found scores of dwellings of various types, including two caliphal residences with associated bath complexes, two aristocratic residences, and service quarters, where the staff worked who attended the occupants of the residences. Also in this zone are spaces associated with the palace guard; some large administrative buildings, where the bureaucratic work of the caliphal state took place; the extraordinary court complex presided over by the reception hall, the famous Hall of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III; the great garden spaces; and, just outside this area, the congregational mosque.

New knowledge of Madīnat al-Zahrā' has come in the last few years from a variety of interrelating factors. Principal among them were, firstly, a change in the working hypotheses, with the introduction of historical hypotheses which explain the city as the full urban expression of the Umayyad caliphate, and which understand it within a context of the development of different Islamic states in both the

* Translated by Mariam Rosser-Owen.

¹ For a brief account of the history of the works undertaken at Madīnat al-Zahrā', see Antonio Vallejo Triano, "Problemas de gestión y administración de Madīnat al-Zahrā' desde el inicio de su recuperación", *Arqueología y Territorio Medieval* 1 (1994), pp. 17–29. An evaluation of the investigations of the last few years can be found in Manuel Acín Almansa, "15 años de investigación sobre Madīnat al-Zahrā'", in *Madīnat al-Zahrā' 1985–2000: 15 Años de Recuperación* (Córdoba: Junta de Andalucía, 2000), pp. 25–55.

Mediterranean world and the central Islamic lands.² The second factor was an expansion of the research objectives, with the use of three levels of archaeological analysis: the territorial scale; the urban scale, or that of the city as a complex; and the scale of the excavated zone, with the support of different methodologies and the evidence provided by other scientific disciplines.³

THE LAND

At the territorial level, the analysis conducted in recent years has allowed us to advance our knowledge of the peculiarities and characteristics of the site's location, and of the conditions affecting the city's establishment; this analysis considered aspects of the topography and landscape as an essential condition of the urban project which resulted in *Madīnat al-Zahrā'*. The location of the city, between valley and mountain range, was carefully chosen to guarantee the permanent visibility of the new centre over a wide strip of the middle zone of the Guadalquivir valley. Much more than in the Abbasid world, 'Abd al-Raḥmān used the topography and the dramatic potential of the site with a clear iconographic and, above all, political intention.⁴

Furthermore, the foundation of the city signified a radical restructuring of the nearby land, which effectively became subservient to the new town, in various senses.⁵ On the one hand, it was used as the main source of stone and construction materials: the whole face of calcareous Miocene limestone, located at the zone of contact between the valley and sierra, was exploited to supply the basic stone used for constructing the city. Other stone used in the construction also reveal a close local provenance, indicating that the main supply of stone resources was

² The key work which opened up this new phase of investigation was Manuel Acien Almansa, "Madīnat al-Zahrā' en el urbanismo musulmán", *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrā'* 1 (1987), pp. 11–26.

³ The catalyst for this process has been the Conjunto Arqueológico, an institution created by the regional government, the Junta de Andalucía, to safeguard and care for this cultural asset.

⁴ The importance of these aspects have been discussed in my work *Madīnat al-Zahrā': Arqueología de su Arquitectura* (in press). For a discussion of the role of the landscape in court architecture, see Dede Fairchild Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000).

⁵ See Antonio Vallejo Triano, "El proyecto urbanístico del estado califal: Madīnat al-Zahrā'", in *La Arquitectura del Islam Occidental*, edited by Rafael López Guzmán (Granada: El Legado Andalusi, 1995), pp. 69–81.

situated within a radius of about 50 km around the city. The proximity of these resources to Madīnat al-Zahrā', and the subsequent ease with which they could be extracted, explains the extraordinary speed of the building works.

On the other hand, in order to guarantee the supply of water to the new town, an ancient aqueduct from the Roman period, which ran through the neighbouring area, was rehabilitated, and the elements which had deteriorated or disappeared were constructed *ex novo*. An important road infrastructure was also planned, to connect the new city with Córdoba, and include it in the network of highways which connected the capital with the rest of al-Andalus. At least two bridges from the caliphal period, and the foundations of several others, survive of this road infrastructure, which demonstrate the significance of this network.

Lastly, this programme of urban development was complemented by the construction nearby of two large complexes, one private in character (the *munya* of al-Rummāniyya), and the other of a state nature (the site of Turruñuelos). The former was a large agricultural and farming operation with a residential zone, palatial in character, which was constructed by the treasurer of the caliphal state, Durri al-Ṣaghīr, and given by him to the caliph al-Ḥakam II in the year 973.⁶ Turruñuelos, however, was an extraordinary building, rectangular in form and of huge dimensions, but so far unexcavated, so it can only be examined by aerial photography.⁷ Our hypothesis is that it was a place for stationing the caliphal troops before they departed on campaign to different fronts.⁸ The placement of these complexes, on either side of the city and not at its southern side, responds to a pattern of organising the land which finds its echo in the urban structure of Madīnat al-Zahrā' itself.

⁶ On this *munya*, see Manuel Ocaña Jiménez, "Las ruínas de Almiría, un yacimiento arqueológico erróneamente denominado", *Al-Qanṭara* 5 (1984), pp. 365–381.

⁷ There are no significant publications on Turruñuelos; however, for an aerial photograph of the site, see my article "El proyecto urbanístico", p. 75, fig. 5.

⁸ Manuel Acien Almansa and Antonio Vallejo Triano, "Urbanismo y estado islámico: de Córdoba a Qurtuba-Madīnat al-Zahrā'", in *Genèse de la Ville Islamique en al-Andalus et au Maghreb Occidental*, edited by Patrice Cressier and Mercedes García-Arenal (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1998), pp. 107–136, see especially p. 126.

THE CITY

In terms of the wider medina, though it remains largely unexcavated, the combination of vertical aerial photography and archaeological survey has allowed us to produce an interpretive plan, which in turn reveals a rigorous approach to urban planning (Fig. 1). As a result of this planning, the city shows a precise zoning which responds to a clear distribution of uses and functions. The central zone, in a clearly defined area, is empty of structures and was therefore probably intended for a range of functions that do not require buildings, such as agricultural activities, as is also suggested by the presence of a reservoir in this area, at the foot of the southern wall of the palace; however, this zone may have had other uses, related to games and leisure activities.

Construction was reserved for the lateral fringes of the medina, which each show a different urban organisation. To the west, there are six large and identical structures, aligned north-south, which we hypothesise to be the base of the city's army, because of their formal resemblance to similar structures at Samarra, such as Istabulāt.⁹ Two small buildings, appropriately orientated towards the south-east, can be identified as mosques for the population which lived and worked in this large sector.

In contrast to the state character of this organisation, the eastern zone reveals a less rigid urban structure, and constitutes an intra-urban village, where most of the houses of the common population were situated—those of merchants, artisans, palace servants, etc.—and other urban installations such as markets and the congregational mosque. The position of this mosque, outside the palace zone but contiguous with it, shows that it was shared by the inhabitants of the palace and those of the medina.

The planning shown by this complete urban picture does not imply, however, the existence of one single process of construction. As far as the walled enclosure is concerned, we know that the palace wall and city wall followed autonomous processes, and the construction of the former preceded that of the latter. Everything seems to indicate that, as in other great cities founded by caliphs, such as Baghdad or Cairo,

⁹ On which see Alastair Northedge, "The palace at Istabulāt, Samarra", *Archéologie Islamique* 3 (1992), pp. 61–86.

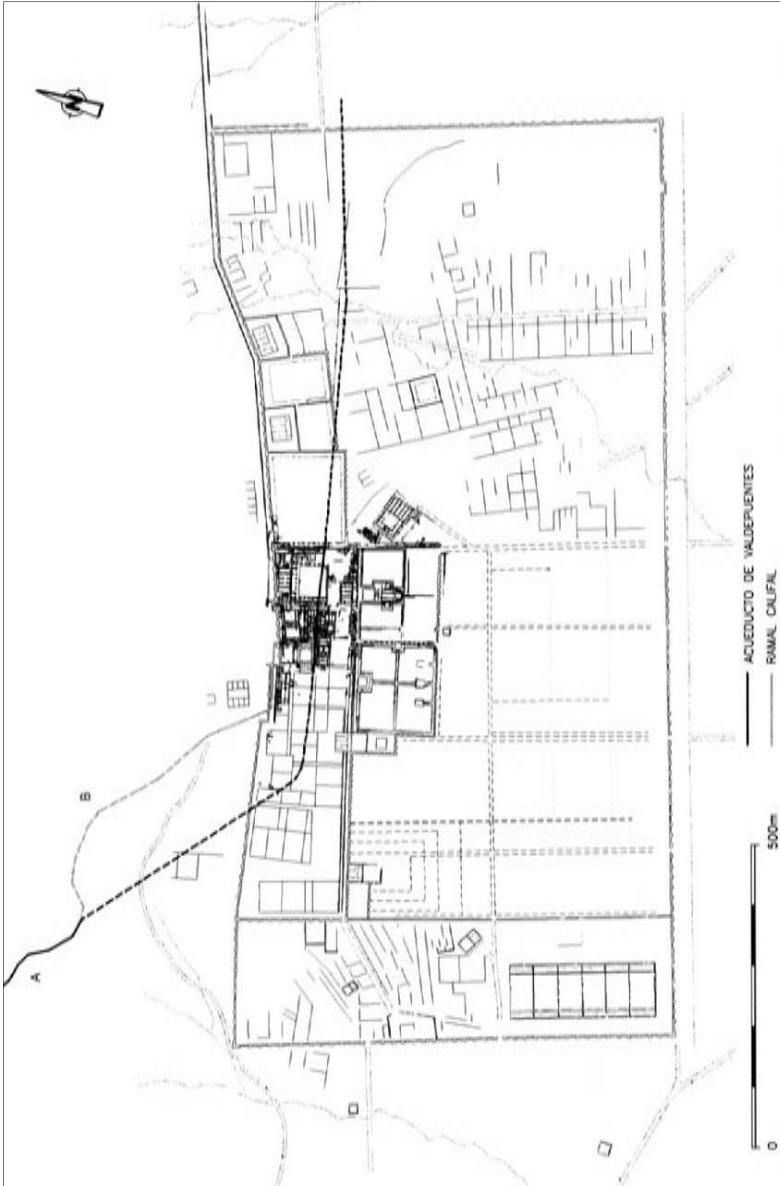


Fig. 1. Plan of the palace-city of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, showing Roman aqueduct (A) and its caliphal spur (B).

the surrounding wall of the medina was constructed later than the seat of power.¹⁰

THE PALACE

In the excavated zone (Fig. 2, Plate 1), the investigations carried out have advanced our understanding of various aspects of the urban planning of the palace, especially the hydraulic system, and of the processes of urban and architectural transformation which operated here, despite the short period during which it was occupied.

The hydraulic system

Current knowledge of the hydraulic system and water supply allows us to assert that the palace, but not the city, relied on a permanent water supply, which reached all its buildings. In order to transport water from its sources in the Sierra Morena, an ancient Roman aqueduct was reused, the *Aqua Augusta*, constructed in the first century C.E. to supply classical Córdoba.¹¹ The main Islamic contribution to this pre-existing infrastructure was the construction of a new bridge, the so-called Valdepuentes Aqueduct—a work of obvious caliphal manufacture, both in the style of its architectural construction, and in its decoration—whereby ‘Abd al-Raḥmān symbolically appropriated the whole Roman hydraulic system.

In the city itself, the Roman aqueduct ran through the central part of the palace at a depth of several metres below the caliphal buildings, in a position and at a level which meant it could not supply water to the constructions in the upper levels of the palace. To solve this problem, the Roman conduction system was intercepted outside the city by a caliphal system, which guaranteed the supply to the palatial buildings at the highest levels. Sections of this system are preserved, extending as far as the great gardens of the lower terrace (Fig. 1).¹² The whole

¹⁰ Nezar Alsayyad, *Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism* (New York and London: Greenwood Press, 1991), p. 149.

¹¹ Research on this aqueduct, and its chronological identification, are due to Ángel Ventura Villanueva, *El Abastecimiento de Agua a la Córdoba Romana. I. El Acueducto de Valdepuentes* (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 1993).

¹² A general account of the results of these investigations can be found in Antonio Vallejo Triano, “Los usos del agua en el Alcázar de Madīnat al-Zahrā’”, in *El Guadalquivir: Patrimonio Histórico Hidráulico de la Cuenca del Guadalquivir* (Madrid: Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, 2002), pp. 278–305.

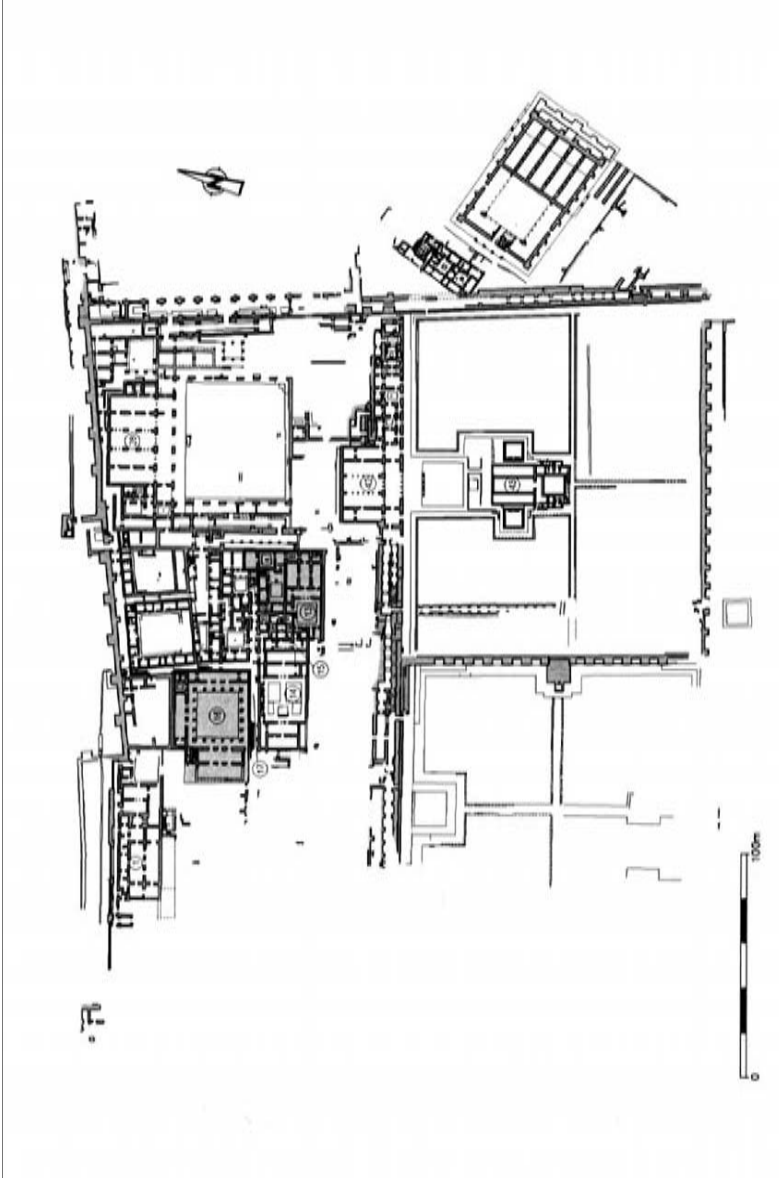


Fig. 2. Plan of the excavated zone of the palace, showing House of Ja'far (13), and the Court of the Pillars (16).

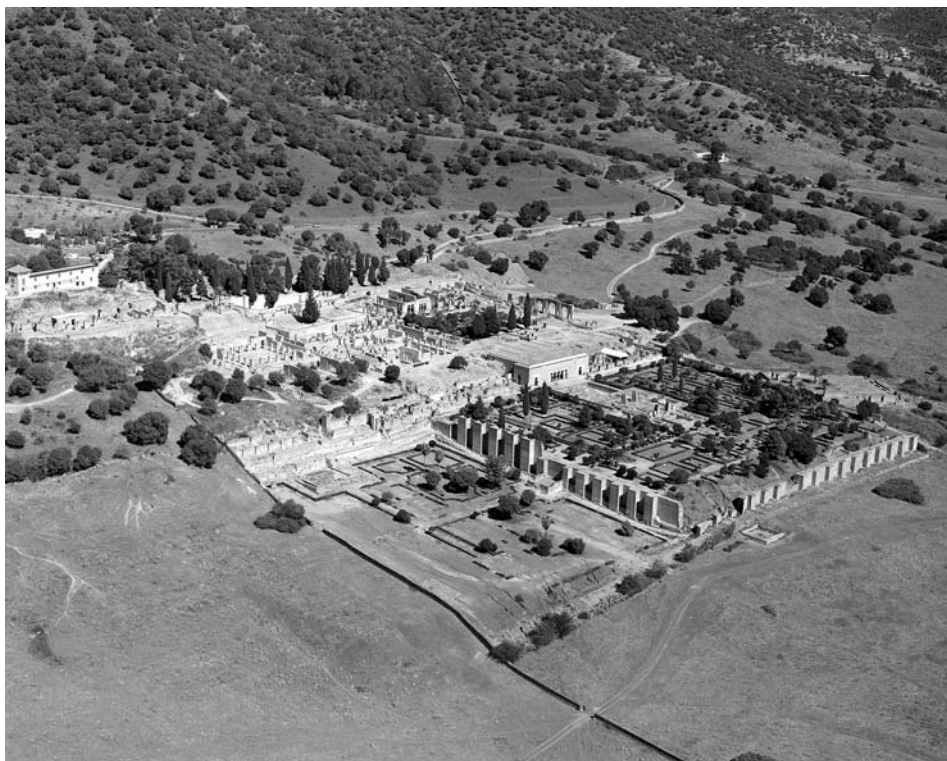


Plate 1. Aerial view, excavated palace zone.

supply system, for consumption and hygiene as well as cultivation, rested on this caliphal construction. Except for the garden pools, the palace did not have cisterns or subterranean tanks for storing rainwater, which was evacuated directly into a network of drains.

Together with the water supply, the sanitary infrastructure was one of the most distinctive features of the urban planning of *Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ*. The sanitary network, that can be documented to date, was integrated into a complex of more than 1800 m of subterranean channels, of different types and sizes, which ran at different depths underneath the palace buildings (Fig. 3). The system was composed of two basic types of channels, some principal or larger channels which passed along the different terraced complexes and clusters of buildings, crossing the centre of the accommodation zone in order to collect rainwater and residual water from the courtyards. Other smaller channels transported water from small courtyards, latrines and other drains, and poured them into the larger channels.

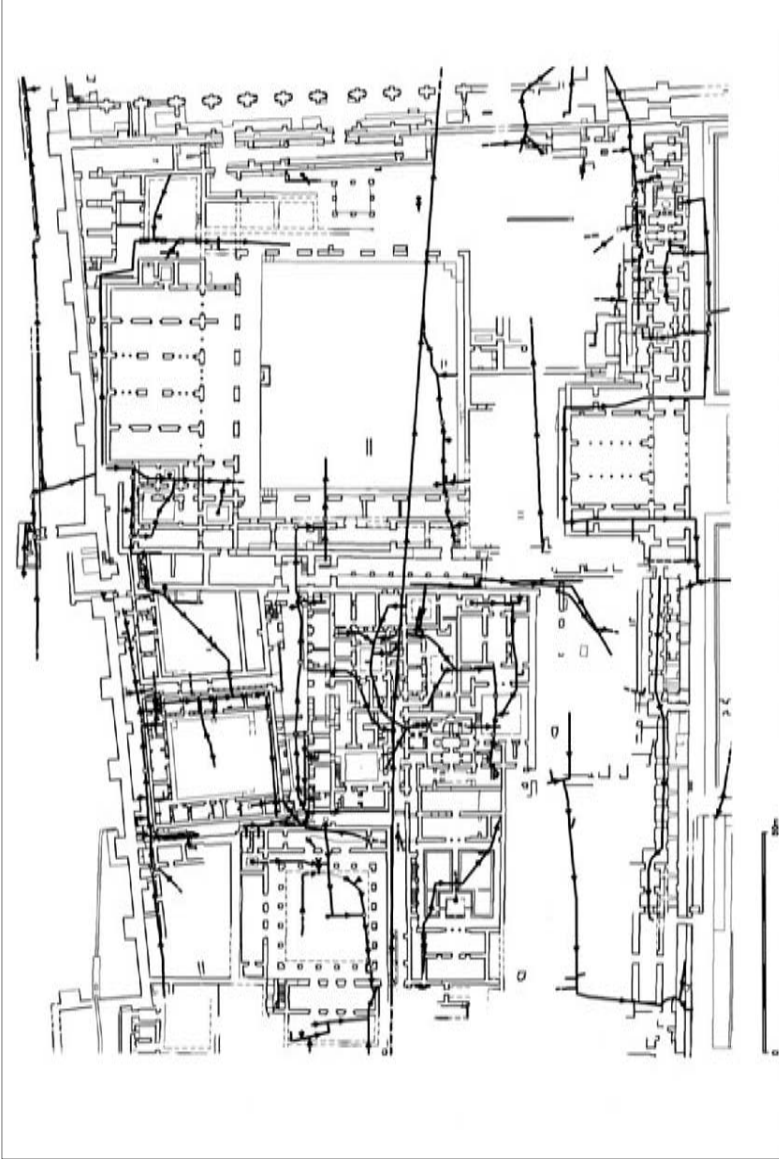


Fig. 3. Detail of the sanitary infrastructure on the upper terrace of the palace. The central rectilinear channel is the Roman channel.

This infrastructure has no parallel among those known in other large urban centres of the period. It affected the entire palace complex, supplied sanitation to all the buildings, and guaranteed the drainage of residual waters to nearby streams. Its secondary function was as a dump for domestic waste, since a large quantity of the site's material record, identifiable as rejected ceramics and foodstuffs, has been found in these pipes.

The extensive branching of this network was due to the multiplicity of connecting elements, and also to the doubling of channels within the same dwelling, which clearly reflects the changes taking place in the urban structure of the palace. As a whole, the layout of the main networks shows a degree of correspondence with the road system.

This sanitary infrastructure relied on a pre-existing structure, the remains of the Roman aqueduct, which, as mentioned above, ran below the central part of the palace: it has been possible to trace its route along a straight trajectory of more than 200 m. This section of the aqueduct had completely lost its original function to supply water, and was used, inside *Madīnat al-Zahrā'*, as a great palace sewer, as shown by the significant volume of waste material collected there.

Construction and Transformation of the Palace

Without a doubt, the most important contribution of the archaeological investigations of recent years has been to uncover the extraordinary process of urban and architectural transformation which the palace underwent after its initial construction phase. The information supplied by the written sources indicates a process of construction of both palace and city, which was characterized by its extraordinary speed, at least in those structures associated with the institutional transfer of certain official services and ateliers from Córdoba to the new centre of power. In the texts, its construction started in the year 936 or 940, according to different authors,¹³ and must have continued throughout the following decade, following a clear sequence: the congregational mosque was completed in 941; some years later, in 945, the caliph was already residing in *Madīnat al-Zahrā'*; and in 947, the *dār al-sikka* (mint), was moved from Córdoba—its change in location is corroborated by

¹³ All authors give the year 325 H./936 C.E. as the date at which construction began, while Ibn Ḥayyān in the *Muqtabis*—"the oldest and most trustworthy source"—gives the year 329 H./940–941 C.E.; see Ana Labarta and Carmen Barceló, "Las fuentes árabes sobre al-Zahrā': estado de la cuestión", *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrā'* 1 (1987), p. 96.

the numismatic evidence, since the first issues from the new city were produced in this year.¹⁴

Apart from the contradictions which some of these dates present in terms of the facts supplied by archaeological investigation,¹⁵ the sources also point out, very generally, that the construction process continued throughout the last twenty-five years of the reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III (that is, between 936 and 961) and during the whole caliphate of al-Ḥakam II (between 961 and 976). From these facts can be inferred a gradual and prolonged process of construction of both palace and town, which was completed during the final years of al-Ḥakam’s caliphate. The model of urban generation which we might derive from the texts, therefore, is one of a city shaped by the accumulation and aggregation of spaces and buildings, i.e. a model in which the founding caliph constructed the most significant sector of the palace and the city, and his son al-Ḥakam completed the urban development with new buildings. No significant processes of transformation or stratification are alluded to at all in the texts, except for the mention of minor alterations to some buildings in the year 972.¹⁶

The archaeological works, however, show a different and much more complicated reality. Earlier investigations have already shown that some of the most notable buildings at Madīnat al-Zahrā’, such as the Hall of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III—also known as the ‘Salón Rico’—and the Upper Basilical Hall, emerged as the result of important alterations which had blocked up or modified earlier structures. In the case of the Hall of

¹⁴ See Alberto Canto García, “De la ceca Al-Andalus a la de Madīnat al-Zahrā’”, *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrā’* 3 (1991), p. 114.

¹⁵ For example, in terms of the date at which the mosque was completed, given the relatively abundant epigraphy from this building—recently pieced back together to suggest at least six friezes and two foundation plaques—the most important and complete of these plaques gives the year 333 H./944–945 C.E. as the date for completion of the works. See María Antonia Martínez Núñez and Manuel Ación Almansa, “La epigrafía de Madīnat al-Zahrā’”, *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrā’* 5 (2004), pp. 111–119, plates III–XI.

¹⁶ This sketch is determined, of necessity, by the documentation preserved by our main informant, Ibn Ḥayyān, so that the loss of his annals relating to the last decade of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s government, and the first of his son al-Ḥakam II, prevents us from knowing in detail about the life of the palace in these years, which were momentous in the evolution of the caliphal state and, consequently, of the palace itself. As for the minor alterations of the year 972, these refer to the modifications undertaken in the *Dār al-Mulk*, or the construction of a prison in the palace. See Ibn Ḥayyān, *Anales Palatinos del califa de Córdoba al-Ḥakam II, por ‘Isā ibn Aḥmad al-Rāzī (360–364 H. = 971–975 J.C.)*, translated by Emilio García Gómez (Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1967), pp. 99–100, 111.

‘Abd al-Raḥmān—the key building in the whole programme of representation of caliphal power which the city embodied—its epigraphy confirms this, by giving a late date for its construction, between the years 953 and 957, which does not correspond with the date of the palace’s foundation as given in the sources (Plate 2).¹⁷

Other buildings, too, show evidence of multiple modifications, of various kinds, which Félix Hernández Giménez described as a phase of “refurbishment” of the initial programme undertaken in the palace.¹⁸ However, with the exception of the large halls already mentioned, this refurbishment had not been clearly explained until now and, above all, we do not know how it came about, or what were the keys to this transformation. Stratigraphic analysis of the walls has been conducted,¹⁹ and indeed the re-excavation of some of these spaces, which has allowed us to understand the interrelationships between these alterations, and to place them in a context which suggests a process of general transformation affecting almost the whole palace, in terms of its urban structure, its architecture and decorative language.

We have been able to precisely document and explain this process in two particular buildings in the palace: the so-called House of Ja‘far, and the building known as the ‘Court of the Pillars’ (Fig. 2).²⁰ The House of Ja‘far is a complex of considerable size, located in the “west wing” (*al-muṣaff al-gharbī*) of the palace.²¹ Its organization is articulated in three well-defined areas, which we have identified as the official zone,

¹⁷ See Manuel Ocaña Jiménez, “Inscripciones árabes descubiertas en Madīnat al-Zahrā’ en 1944”, *Al-Andalus* 10 (1945), pp. 154–159. Recently, the epigraphy of the complex of buildings on the terrace over which this hall presides was studied by María Antonia Martínez Núñez, “La epigrafía del Salón de ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III”, in *Madīnat al-Zahrā’*. *El Salón de ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III* (Córdoba: Junta de Andalucía, 1995), pp. 109–152.

¹⁸ Félix Hernández Giménez, *Madīnat al-Zahrā’*. *Arquitectura y Decoración* (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra, 1985), especially pp. 13–14, 22, 44–45, 64–65, and passim, for mentions of this refurbishment.

¹⁹ On the methodology of this kind of analysis, and for its application in studies at the Alhambra, see the contribution by Vegas and Mileto in this volume.

²⁰ See Antonio Vallejo Triano, Alberto Montejo and Andrés García, “Resultados preliminares de la intervención arqueológica en la ‘Casa de Ya‘far’ y en el edificio de ‘Patio de los Pilares’ de Madīnat al-Zahrā’”, *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrā’* 5 (2004), pp. 199–239.

²¹ Ibn Ḥayyān, *Anales Palatinos*, p. 88.



Plate 2. 2.1. House of Ja'far during restoration; 2.2. Court of the Pillars.

the private zone, and the service zone (Fig. 4.1, Plate 2.1).²² Since its excavation by Hernández Giménez in 1970, it has come to be hypothetically identified with the residence of an extremely high official in the caliphal administration, Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, known as Jaʿfar “the slave”, who was *ḥājib* of al-Ḥakam II between the years 961 and 971.²³ Neither textual nor archaeological evidence contradicts this hypothetical attribution.

The excavations carried out in this space have demonstrated the existence of a phase before the construction of this residence. This earlier phase was composed of three houses, one to the north and two to the south, which, as a group, established the basic limits of the plot of land on which the residence of the *ḥājib* was later built (Fig. 4.2, Plate 3). All three corresponded to the same basic dwelling type, organized around a courtyard, rectangular or square, with rows of living spaces on three of its sides, but not on the southern side.

The transformation of these three earlier houses into a single dwelling was a well-organized process. The dismantling of these houses was accomplished extremely carefully, with the clear objective of reusing as many of the construction materials as possible. This is confirmed by the complete absence from the pavements of debris of roof-tiles, ashlar blocks, nails, or fragments of wood; the painstaking dismantling of structures which were incompatible with the new spatial organization; and the preservation of those sections of wall which coincided with the new architectural project. Perhaps the most significant part of this process was the extraction from the rooms of the most valuable paving

²² Antonio Vallejo Triano, “La vivienda de servicios y la llamada Casa de Yaʿfar”, in *La Casa Hispano-Musulmana: Aportaciones de la Arqueología* (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, 1990), pp. 131 ff. Antonio Almagro Gorbea, however, in “Análisis tipológico de la arquitectura residencial de Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ”, in Martina Müller-Wiener et al., ed., *Al-Andalus und Europa: zwischen Orient und Okzident* (Düsseldorf: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2004), p. 123, points out the existence of only two areas, the official and the private, and considers that the service zone did not communicate with the residence, since the large room which we interpret as a point of connection between these spaces is, according to him, a latrine. It is worth pointing out on this matter that a latrine is the only room among the houses of al-Zahrāʾ whose identification is not subject to problems of interpretation as to function, since its existence necessarily entails the presence of sanitary infrastructure, which, in this case, does not exist.

²³ Hernández Giménez, *Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ*, pp. 67–71. On this official, see Manuel Ocaña Jiménez, “Yaʿfar el eslavo”, *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* 12 (1976), pp. 217–223. After his death, the residence was bestowed by al-Ḥakam II on the *fatā al-kabīr* and former-slave, Fāʾiq ibn al-Ḥakam, the maternal uncle of the future caliph Hishām II, as further proof of his political advancement: see Ibn Ḥayyān, *Anales Palatinos*, p. 88.

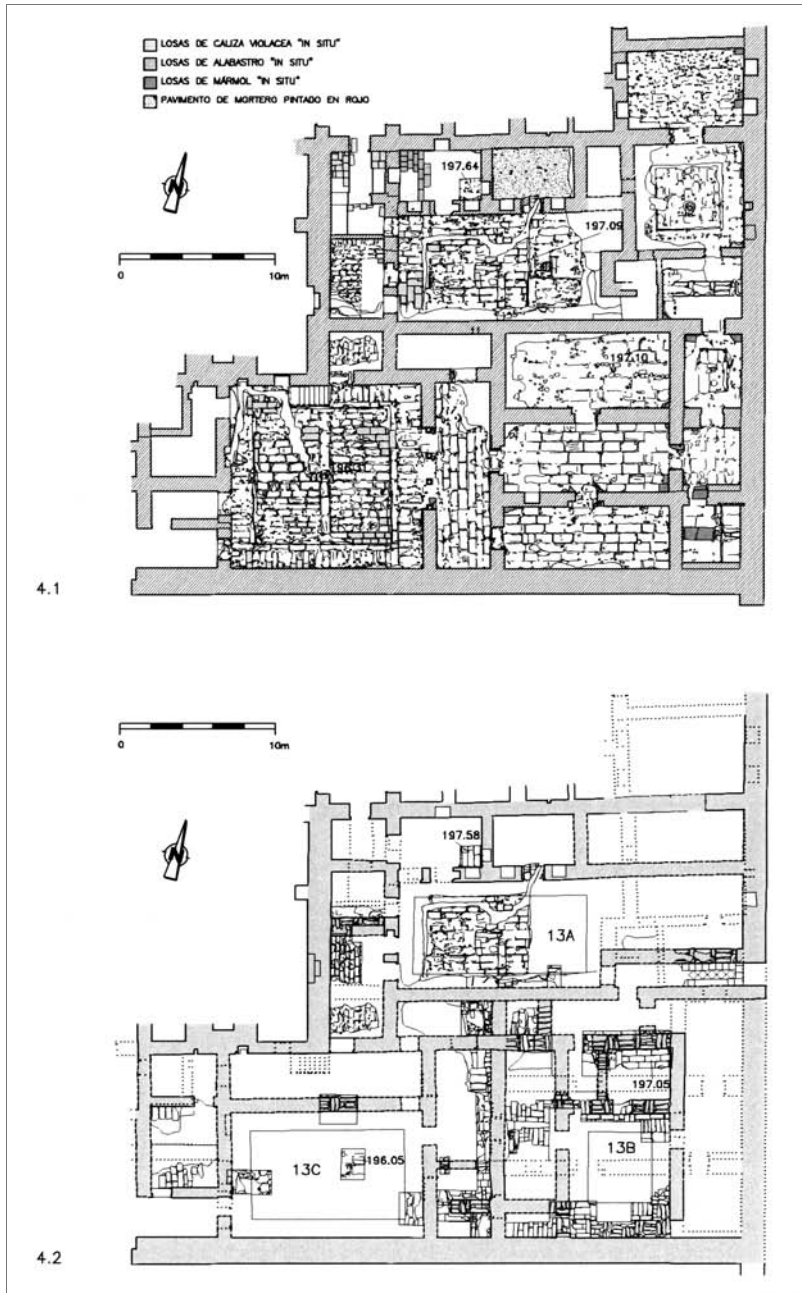


Fig. 4. 4.1. Plan of the House of Ja'far; 4.2. Pre-existing houses on the site of the House of Ja'far (13A, 13B and 13C).



Plate 3. 3.1., 3.2., 3.3. Pre-existing buildings on the site of the House of Ja'far.

slabs, such as flagstones of alabaster and purple limestone, in order to reuse them in the rooms of the new complex.²⁴

In the building known as the Court of the Pillars, the dynamics of its transformation were very similar. This complex, also situated in the western part of the palace, in the zone to which access was most restricted, was structured around a large square patio, surrounded on all sides by galleries supported by pillars (Fig. 5.1, Plate 2.2). The living rooms were arranged on three sides, and responded to the same model of a rectangular central hall, with rooms on each of its short sides, which connected to the gallery by means of three openings supported on pillars and covered by horseshoe arches. The most important rooms were located on the western flank, where two rooms were arranged in parallel with the same distribution of openings, compared to the single rooms on the other two sides. The higher status of these western rooms is also evident from the different treatment of their pavements, which are of marble, compared to the covering of large flagstones of purple limestone in the rest of the building, and the small slabs of alabaster in the eastern rooms. The entrance to the complex was from the southwestern corner of the patio, by means of a narrow corridor, in which some slabs of its alabaster pavement are preserved.²⁵ At present, we do not know the function of this building, though in Hernández Giménez's view it was for administrative purposes.²⁶

The excavations carried out in this complex have shown the existence of earlier structures which, as at the House of Ja'far, established the basic limits of the plot of land which the Court of the Pillars now occupies. We have been able to document two buildings, one to the north and the other to the south, each one of them occupying approximately half of the later complex (Fig. 5.2). The building located to the north has completely disappeared, though we know that part of it was a communication route towards the west of the palace, since an opening covered by a monumental arch is preserved, though blocked up, from the time of this phase (Plate 4.2). The ground level of this building

²⁴ After its construction, the House of Ja'far also underwent later alterations, which did not substantially modify its organization or its architectural structure.

²⁵ Antonio Almagro, "Análisis tipológico", p. 123, fig. 5 and p. 124, maintains that the entrance to this building was from the wall on the closed southern side, without taking into account that attached to the top of this wall, and along its whole length, was the aqueduct which supplied the hydraulic system of the large gardens on the palace's lower terrace.

²⁶ Hernández Giménez, *Madinat al-Ṣāhira*, p. 74.

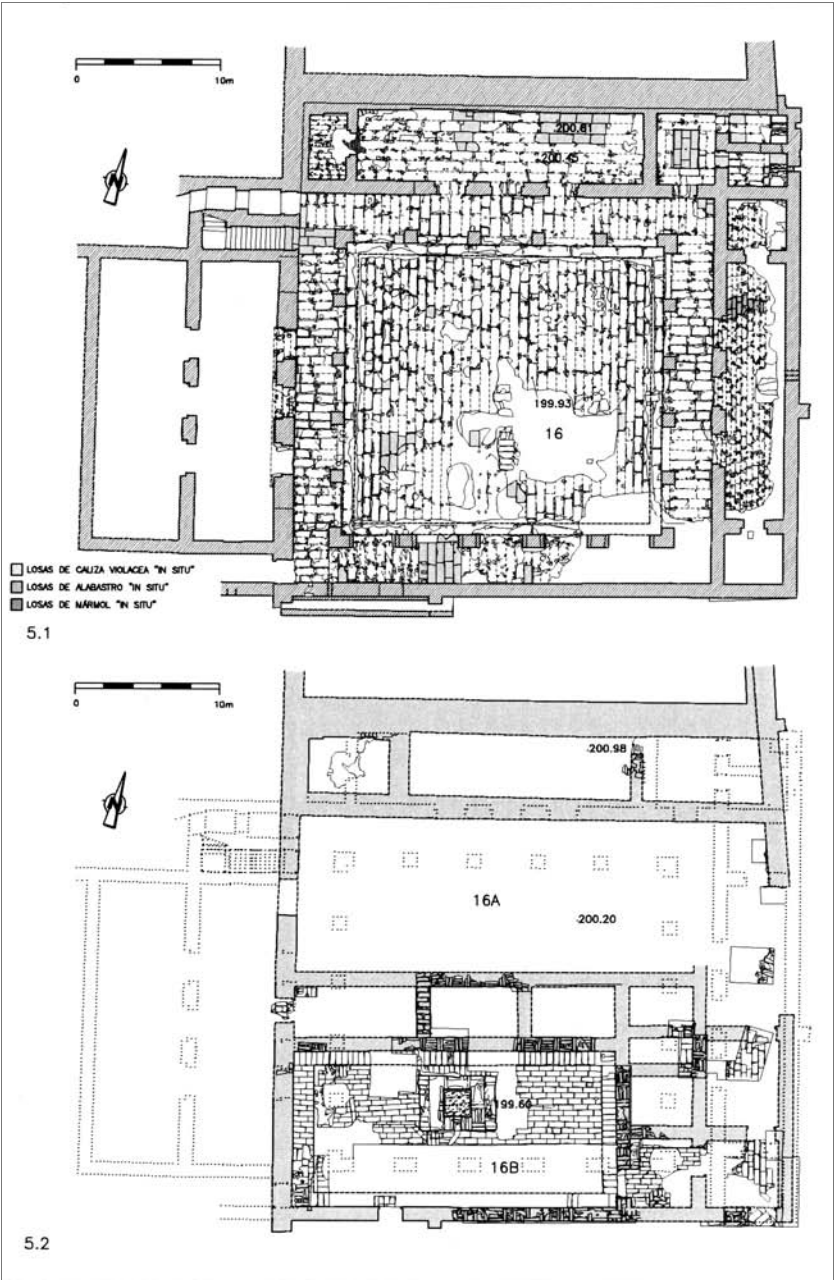


Fig. 5. 5.1. Building known as the Court of the Pillars; 5.2. Pre-existing buildings at the Court of the Pillars (16A and 16B).



Plate 4. 4.1., 4.2., 4.3. Pre-existing buildings and structures on the site of the Court of the Pillars.

was found above the ground level of the later Court of the Pillars; as a result, neither the pavements nor the structures were preserved and must have been dismantled, except for some perimeter walls which were kept as part of the later complex.

The building located to the south, however, can be identified as a dwelling, whose remains have been excavated and partially understood, since it was found at a lower level. This dwelling was organized around a rectangular patio, paved with flagstones of calcareous stone and furnished with a small square pond in the centre of its northern side (Plates 4.1 and 4.3). We know that the rooms were arranged around the patio on three of its sides, and not on the southern side, even though we have not been able to excavate the western flank. Before its final elimination, this dwelling underwent an important alteration, when a ramped road was constructed on its eastern flank, where the new entrance to the dwelling was then established.

The new architectural programme to construct the Court of the Pillars occurred around the middle of the 950s, and signified the radical transformation of the earlier buildings. The structures of these dwellings were almost completely erased, since only some of their materials were reused, especially, as in the House of Ja'far, the walls which delimited the site to the south, west and north.²⁷

These two cases are eloquent examples of how the process of transforming the palace came about, at least in the eastern sector. The result was the appearance of a radically new programme, not only in the monumentality of the buildings (each of the new buildings multiplied the surface area of the buildings of earlier phases), but also from the decorative and typological point of view, with the introduction of new architectural models which had not existed during the initial phase, such as the patio with porticoed galleries at the Court of the Pillars, or the pseudo-basilical model at the House of Ja'far. Furthermore, their construction implied important changes in the topography, in the internal road system, and in the hydraulic infrastructure which disrupted the urban structure of the palace.

As already mentioned, the clearest manifestation of this refurbishment from the architectural point of view was the appearance of the two great basilical edifices which have been excavated: the Hall of 'Abd

²⁷ As at the *hājib*'s residence, the buildings of the Court of the Pillars also experienced later alterations, of lesser quality, especially in the southern gallery of the patio.

al-Raḥmān III, and the Upper Basilical Hall.²⁸ The first of these was a hall for the caliph's political receptions. It is identified with one of the two buildings which are mentioned in the written sources as having had this purpose, specifically with that known as the *Majlis al-Sharqī* (Eastern Hall), where the majority of ambassadors' audiences were hosted, and the two great Islamic religious festivals celebrated (*ʿīd al-ḥajj*, or the feast at the breaking of the fast, and *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*, the feast of sacrifice) during the final years of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's reign, and throughout the administration of al-Ḥakam II. The second of these buildings must have been an administrative space, and has come to be identified with the *Dār al-ḥund* (House of the Army) which is again mentioned in the written sources, and whose chronology is similar to that of the 'Salón Rico', even though it lacks any trace of epigraphic evidence.²⁹ Both buildings are characterized by their basilical form, which nevertheless varies between them; by their orientation to the south; and by giving on to large open spaces, a garden in the first case and a courtyard in the second, suited to extensive processional movements.

Together with this new basilical type, unknown at Madīnat al-Zahrā' until this time, a new decorative language was introduced into the buildings associated with the representation of power, especially the 'Salón Rico' whose decoration is best-known (Colour Plate 1A). The innovations of its decorative programme are found on various levels, and suggest the introduction of an influence foreign to al-Andalus, perhaps coming from the East, and formed in one of the artistic centres in contact with the Abbasid world.³⁰

²⁸ A third building of this basilical type exists, the so-called 'Central Pavilion', situated in front of the Hall of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, and dated by epigraphy to the same years as the latter. Only the plan of this structure can be identified, with difficulty, because of the extraordinary plundering of its remains: its applied decoration is abundant, but it has not been restored.

²⁹ Hernández Giménez, *Madīnat al-Zahrā'*, p. 26. On the difficulty of identifying the excavated buildings with those mentioned in the written sources, especially the *Anales Palatinos*, which only covers the years 971 to 975, see Manuel Acien Almansa, "15 años de investigación", p. 53, and Antonio Vallejo Triano, *Madīnat al-Zahrā'*. *Guía Oficial del Conjunto Arqueológico* (Seville: Consejería de Cultura Andalucía, 2004), pp. 89–90, 99–100.

³⁰ Hernández Giménez, *Madīnat al-Zahrā'*, pp. 165–166, 173. Christian Ewert arrived at a similar conclusion, see "Elementos de la decoración vegetal del Salón Rico de Madīnat al-Zahrā': los tableros vegetales", in *Madīnat al-Zahrā'. El Salón de 'Abd al-Raḥmān III*, pp. 43–57. The problem of the origins of this new decorative language cannot be detached from that of the architecture into which it is inserted, which is also innovative in relation to the buildings of the initial phase, nor can it be discussed without reference to other types of surviving material, such as epigraphy. In relation

The appearance of these buildings also implied an important urban restructuring, which effected all the constructions on each of the terraces, including the upper garden. As in the case of the dwellings, as we have seen, the earlier buildings were totally or partially demolished to allow for the development of the new architectural programmes: these were not limited to the basilical halls that have been discussed, since new and important buildings also arose in both terraces. It was in the context of this refurbishment that an important extension of the palace was constructed towards the East, as well as the addition of the monumental porticoed entrance gallery at the most important point of the palace.³¹

The chronology of this momentous process of reform must be placed in the middle of the 950s, and is signalled by the dates given for the construction of the Hall of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III. The representative nature, in some cases, and administrative in others, of these buildings and spaces arose with the reforms, and allow us to affirm that the objective of this transformation was double. On the one hand, the suitability of the palace to new forms of the representation of power, altering the setting in order to magnify the figure of the caliph. On the other, the adaptation of this palace to reflect an important restructuring of the state by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III in the year 955, according to the sources, in which he divided the whole caliphal administration into four great offices, each directed by a vizier.³²

It is in the context of this great remodelling that one may hypothetically situate the construction of the Court of the Pillars. Even though we do not have absolute dates for this building, the relative chronology of its construction is delimited by a *terminus ante quem*: the installation of the hydraulic system in the large palace gardens, which roughly speaking must be assigned to dates close to, or slightly earlier

to this, Martínez Núñez and Ación Almansa, “La epigrafía de Madīnat al-Zahrā’”, pp. 128–129, have pointed out that the innovations introduced into the official epigraphy of the buildings also appear at the time of this refurbishment, in both the calligraphy and the formulae used, which reproduce those adopted by the Abbasid caliphs, and also followed, with variations, by the Fatimid caliphs.

³¹ The archaeological analysis of this entire process of alteration and the corresponding urban planning can be found in Antonio Vallejo Triano, *Madīnat al-Zahrā’*. *Arqueología de su Arquitectura* (in press).

³² The information, supplied by Ibn ‘Idhārī, has been collected by various authors: see, among others, Mohamed Meouak, *Pouvoir Souverain, Administration Centrale et Élités Politiques dans l’Espagne Umayyade (II^a–IV^a/VIII^a–X^a siècles)* (Tuusula, Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1999), pp. 55–56.

than, the construction of the Hall of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, since the aqueduct which fed this system was attached above the southern wall of the Court of the Pillars.³³

In the House of Ja'far, the chronological indicators are again relative, although they all suggest a somewhat later date. Among others, it should be pointed out that the decorative programme of the interior façade, opening onto the patio, is clearly later than the 'Salón Rico', since it is based on a vegetal language that has certain elements and compositions which appear to be more evolved than those in the caliphal *majlis* (Colour Plate 1B). This stylistic argument, already suggested by Hernández Giménez, accords with the political biography of the official who lived there, since the residence could only have been constructed after his accession to the highest administrative office of the state, that is, after his appointment as *ḥājib* in the year 961, and before his death in 971.

By way of conclusion, it can be said that these investigations are beginning to reveal key points in the process by which the palace was formed. The urban structure and the buildings which we see today cannot be understood as the sum of successive contributions constructed by different caliphs in the palatial zone. Rather, they were the result of an initial urban and architectural programme, planned and executed in the 940s by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, and of a profound and wide-ranging transformation of this programme which unfolded throughout the 950s under the same caliph. New reforms effected in the following years by al-Ḥakam II, of a less ambitious nature, completed the excavated zone of the palace as it would have appeared at the end of its days.³⁴

The construction of the House of Ja'far, its position and its multi-functional programme, which combines the spaces of official life with private and service life, brings to light other complementary aspects of this politico-administrative structure. On the one hand, it denotes the growing importance of the institution of the *ḥijāba* in these years, in keeping with the developments observed in the East, specifically in the Abbasid caliphate; and on the other hand, the significance of Ja'far ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān represents the brilliant rise of a non-Arab elite,

³³ Hernández Giménez, *Madīnat al-Ẓahra'*, p. 75.

³⁴ We do not have epigraphic confirmation of construction activity in this zone during the long reign of Hishām II, between 976 and the outbreak of the *fitna* in the year 1010, though certain limited reforms can be identified which might hypothetically be attributed to this period, which is still not clearly understood.

of slave origins but educated in the palace, to the highest posts in the state hierarchy. In the second half of the tenth century, these *ṣaḡālība* were made eminent by the first two caliphs of al-Andalus, in order to counteract the power of the great families of the Arab aristocracy, who had monopolized the high offices of the Umayyad administration since the time of the amirate. From this position, these *ṣaḡālība* came to form an elite which from this moment on entered into conflict with other groups for the division of power in the state.³⁵

³⁵ Eduardo Manzano Moreno, *Conquistadores, Emires y Califas. Los Omeyas y la Formación de al-Andalus* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2006), pp. 477–491, has clearly explained the networks of personal and matrimonial alliances which, since the time of the amirate, interwove the great families of the Arab aristocracy in order to enhance their positions in the high offices of the Umayyad administration, as well as the open struggle with other groups, in the middle years of the caliphate, to maintain their status. On the elite formed by the *ṣaḡālība* and their role in these years, see Mohamed Meouak, *Ṣaḡālība, Eunukes et Esclaves à la Conquête du Pouvoir* (Tuusula, Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004).

THE DWELLINGS OF MADĪNAT AL-ZAHRĀ': A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

*Antonio Almagro**

INTRODUCTION

The second half of the tenth century, during the reigns of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III and al-Ḥakam II, was a time of fervent construction. The new court city of Madīnat al-Zahrā' provided a unique set of circumstances for these activities, which brought about intense development in the design of new architectural forms, as well as in the definition of architectural programmes and functional types. Because of this innovation, the new capital city became a veritable laboratory for experimentation and for the development of architectural forms.¹ Many of these were the fruit of long evolutionary processes, beginning with the first construction at the Great Mosque of Córdoba, which is the earliest extant example of Andalusī architectural culture. Other new forms were undoubtedly created during the course of this massive project, which clearly required abundant contributions of material and human resources, not only for the city's construction, but also for its conception and design.

The scarcity of information available today on Andalusī architecture before the year 936 compels us to consider Madīnat al-Zahrā' as the point of origin of much of the architecture of subsequent periods, as there is no evidence to prove otherwise.² Although many forms and

* A simpler version of this article, without computer reconstructions, was published as Antonio Almagro Gorgea, "Análisis tipológico de la arquitectura residencial de Madīnat al-Zahrā'", in *Al-Andalus und Europa: Zwischen Orient und Okzident* ed. Martina Müller-Wiener et al. (Düsseldorf: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2004), pp. 117–124. The introduction was translated by Margaret Hander, and the catalogue by Glair D. Anderson.

¹ Antonio Almagro, "La arquitectura en al-Andalus en torno al año 1000: Madīnat al-Zahrā'", in *La Península Ibérica en torno al año 1000. VII Congreso de Estudios Medievales* (León, 2001), pp. 165–191.

² Until recently, the only structures believed to date from the eighth or ninth centuries were military. Now, the increasing number of examples allows us to understand this period as a more creative one than had previously been thought. The recent discoveries in the Moreías area of Mérida, for example, indicate the existence of residential buildings that were well organized, and based on compositional principles that have not yet been analyzed contextually or comparatively. See Pedro Mateos Cruz and Miguel

types probably had influences earlier than their first appearance in the palatine city near Córdoba, their employment there undoubtedly played a role in defining their very nature and subsequent development. In fact, it is important to note that the full range of architectural types found in al-Andalus during the following five centuries was already present at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ.

It must be clarified that the term 'architectural type' may be understood as a manner of spatial organization that follows a particular set of criteria, and tends to correlate with the functional aim of the structure in question. However, in Islamic architecture in general, and in al-Andalus in particular, this relationship is not always evident. Andalusī residential structures or dwellings show different characteristic architectural types, all of which are present at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ. In addition, there is evidence for other architectural types that seem to have been born and died there, as they were never seen again in later houses or palaces that otherwise adhered to the same models. In Islamic architecture generally, and especially in al-Andalus, architectural types are frequently applied to several uses, often impeding the definitive identification of the true functions of a structure. The building forms themselves did not dictate a particular function, rather this was determined by the activities carried out within each architectural space.

As a result, it is impossible to assert that all the buildings analyzed in this study were unequivocally used as residences. While it is comparatively easy to identify which structures were designated for the ceremonies and functions of the royal court, because of the grandness of their layout and the sumptuousness of their décor, it is not known which architectural forms hosted the palace's various administrative functions. It is therefore possible that some of the structures analyzed here as dwellings were actually destined for more service uses. Furthermore, some of the plans presented here contradict earlier restorations, which could have been carried out without sufficient information.

Alba Calzado, "De Emerita Augusta a Marida", in *Visigodos y Omeyas. Un debate entre la Antigüedad Tardía y la Alta Edad Media*, ed. Luis Caballero and Pedro Mateos, *Anejos de Archivo Español de Arqueología* 23 (Madrid: Instituto de Historia, 2000), pp. 143–168, especially pp. 156–163.

METHODOLOGY

This study has been conducted following the methodology that has become customary in the research conducted by the Escuela de Estudios Árabes in Granada. Each project is based on a precise survey of the architectural remains to be analyzed. Considering Madīnat al-Zahrā's expanse, extreme elevation changes and terracing system, we opted for an aerial photogrammetric survey.³ It was then necessary to complement this with a field survey, so as to detect errors, misinterpretations and omissions of significant details. The data obtained from measuring the aerial photos was then linked to and complemented with other drawings obtained through photogrammetry on the ground. We thus produced plans at various scales, which served as the foundation for our hypotheses of the original building forms, which were initially drawn in AutoCAD. These studies were based on the existing site remains, as well as on information drawn from comparative studies of buildings from coeval, earlier and later periods.

Next, each structure was digitally modelled, creating a complete model of the overall compound. The use of computerized media to generate virtual reconstructions that allow for the observation of spatial qualities has become a powerful means for the diffusion of research, but it also permits us to conduct analyses that lead to deeper architectural knowledge. The modelling process includes the following steps: a preliminary study of the objectives of the model; analyses of similar cases to establish criteria for the rendering of uncertain, doubtful or indefinite features; a draft virtual model that establishes levels of metric precision and realism, the management and illumination of the model; and, finally, a critique of the preliminary results.

The qualitative leap that occurs when information is transferred into the digital environment is immense. In this medium, the model becomes a powerful source of information on measurements, materials and perception, which can provide information that is useful in countless ways. Once this model is generated, it offers a wide range of possibilities. It can be used to obtain a particular visual representation or to perform linear, area or volume measurements. It can help in associating material qualities and textures, or we can use it to explore

³ Photogrammetry is the technique based on the use of photographs for measuring, and then making plans of land, buildings and any other objects.

photorealistic effects (as in Colour Plate 4A), or to navigate through simulated virtual environments. The products of these digitally-configured spaces are numerous.

This tool enables us to understand the architectural characteristics of a reconstructed space through immersion, and to observe its spaces through a generated perceptive experience. It provides us with the opportunity to carry out a perceptual analysis through simulating a particular trajectory through space. It allows us to recognize spatial sequencing, to observe architecture from several positions chosen at random, and to obtain a bird's eye view of the landscape or of the reconstructed architecture. In other words, we may enjoy and contemplate the architecture of the past using a tool of the future.

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Not including the gardens and esplanades, at least 50% of the excavated area of the palace of Madīnat al-Zahrā' is occupied by structures that we believe to be residential (Fig. 1),⁴ that is, a total of seventeen buildings or constructed units. Among these, we may establish a primary classification based on whether a building's spaces are organized around a courtyard or not.⁵ Where a courtyard is included, this is always the element around which the building is organized, through which it receives light and ventilation, and around which internal traffic is patterned. This group is the more prevalent of the two and within it we find buildings without porticos, buildings with porticos around their perimeters, buildings with porticos on only one side, or on opposite sides. While some are true porticos with pillars, others are actually anterooms-porticos.⁶ These have been included in the portico group in this study.

An additional typological classification relates to the layout of the main halls within residential units. There are two basic groups: rooms arranged frontally, and those arranged transversally. In both groups, there is a tendency for the main hall to be accompanied by two lateral

⁴ Antonio Almagro Gorbea, "Jardín con plantas (y alzados) de papel", in *Arquitectura en al-Andalus. Documentos para el siglo XXI*, ed. Alfonso Jiménez et al. (Barcelona: El Legado Andalusi, 1996), pp. 205–284, especially p. 211.

⁵ Antonio Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y Palacios Nazaríes* (Barcelona: El Legado Andalusi, 1996), pp. 19–26.

⁶ Georges Marçais, "Salle, Antisalle. Recherches sur l'évolution d'un thème de l'architecture domestique en pays d'Islam", *Annales de l'Institut d'Études Orientales* X (1952), pp. 274–301.

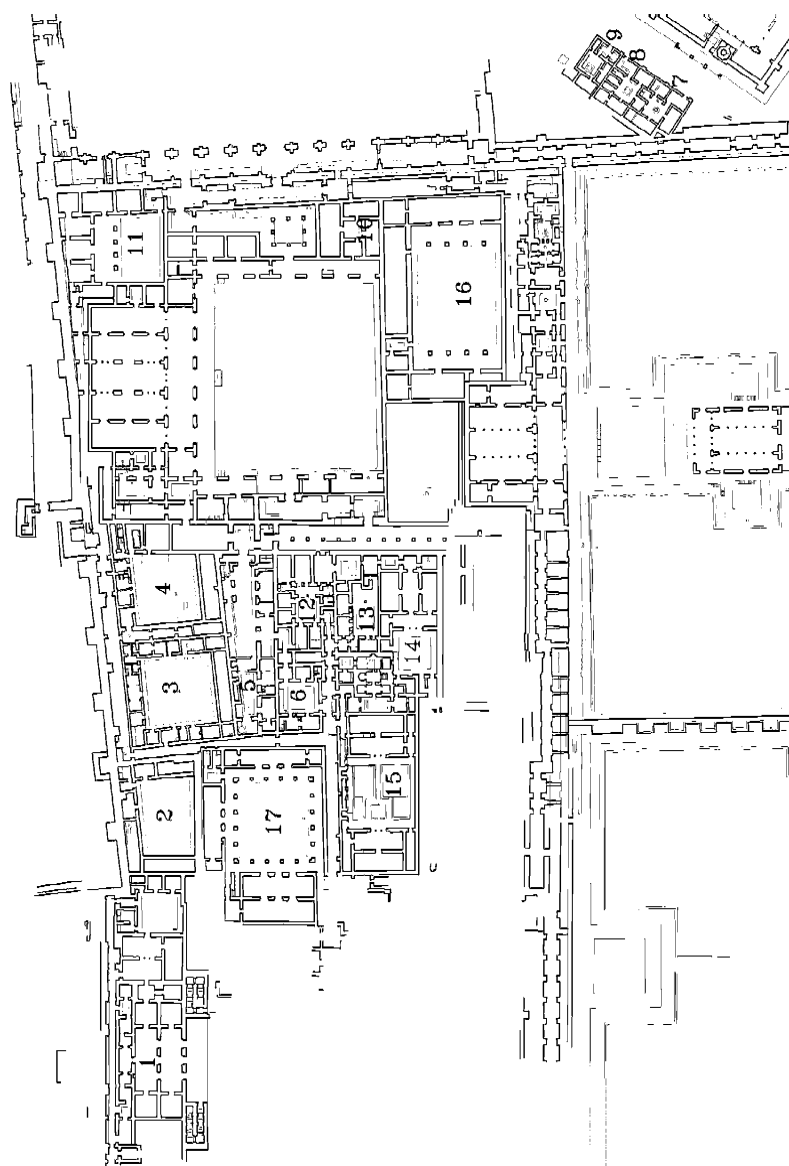


Fig. 1. General Plan of the palace of Madīnat al-Zahrā' with the location of the residential buildings marked.

rooms. In the first type the three rooms tend to be of similar size. If the reception room is arranged transversally, it tends to be somewhat longer, while the other two rooms tend to be smaller in size, and more square-shaped in their proportions.

This classification invites suggestions about the possible origins of these architectural types, as well as their later development. The most common model—the house with a courtyard—corresponds to the type of Mediterranean house that is also widespread throughout the Near East. Its origins possibly lie in the Roman architectural tradition of the Iberian Peninsula, or perhaps in the residential structures found in the earliest Islamic architecture that, in turn, propagated the Eastern Roman tradition. It is important to emphasize a tendency that is also characteristic of Umayyad models of the eastern Mediterranean, i.e. the relative scarcity of porticos in the buildings of Madīnat al-Zahrā', especially of porticos that run the entire perimeter of the courtyard. This absence clearly breaks with the tradition of the classical Roman peristyle dwelling, and later becomes a norm of Andalusī architecture. Courtyards with one or two porticos on opposite sides—according to the model that becomes more widespread in al-Andalus—seem to be of Eastern origin, and appear to find their closest chronological parallels in the palace of Ukhaidir in Iraq, and the Fatimid houses of Fustat.⁷

As for the layout of the main halls, the longer room with two side rooms seems also to be Eastern in origin, but this model was not long-lived in al-Andalus. Houses like that next to the Dār al-Jund (Fig. 4, no. 11) clearly draw on precedents such as Ukhaidir, and the Syrian *buyūt* of the Umayyad desert palaces.⁸ The *oecus* of the Roman *villae*, which as reception rooms could have had a function similar to that of the main halls of the Islamic houses,⁹ cannot be considered a direct precedent, because the side rooms that often accompany the *oecus* for the purposes of symmetry rarely connect to the main room.

The main halls laid out transversally, with or without rooms at their extremes, are the prototype for the main hall of Andalusī houses and

⁷ K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. II: *Early Abbasids, Umayyads of Cordova, Aghlabids, Tulunids and Samanids, A.D. 751–905* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), pp. 71–73; *ibid.*, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), fig. 63.

⁸ Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. I: *Umayyads A.D. 622–750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

⁹ María Cruz Fernández Castro, *Villas Romanas en España* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes, Archivos y Bibliotecas, 1982), p. 202.

palaces. Most typical are those located on the north and east sides of the Court of the Pillars (Fig. 9, no. 18), which already show the unmistakable proportion and layout of the rooms of later Andalusi dwellings. The precedent for this model has not yet been identified, although perhaps it was adopted because it was simpler than the type previously mentioned.¹⁰

CATALOGUE

The main part of this article consists of a catalogue of the dwellings of Madīnat al-Zahrā' with brief accompanying descriptions, which are complemented by the work of López Cuervo,¹¹ Hernández Giménez,¹² and Vallejo Triano.¹³

Houses without courtyards

1. *Residence of the Caliph (Dār al-Mulk) (Fig. 2a)*

Situated in the highest zone of the city even as it is dominated by the supposed *alcazaba*, the dwelling which is believed to be the private residence of the caliph occupies a privileged site, due not only to the security of its position but to its view overlooking the rest of the city and the surrounding landscape. The excavated remains of this site are organized into two groups of rooms. The main zone consists of three parallel halls fronted by a large terrace, open to the city and the landscape (though possibly covered and porticoed along its front façade), and which enjoyed a panoramic view over the city and the Guadalquivir valley. Remains of what appears to be a double staircase linked the terrace to the unexcavated lower zone to the south, and to the rest of the city's residential zone. From this terrace-portico, one entered a hall which probably had three doors similar to those which linked this hall

¹⁰ Christian Ewert, "Tradiciones omeyas en la arquitectura palatina de la época de los taifas. La Aljafería de Zaragoza", in *Actas del XXIII Congreso Internacional de Historia del Arte*, Vol. II (Granada, 1973), pp. 62–75.

¹¹ Serafín López Cuervo, *Medina az-Zahra, Ingeniería y Formas* (Madrid: Ministerio de Obras públicas y Urbanismo, 1985).

¹² Félix Hernández Giménez, *Madinat al-Zahra'. Arquitectura y Decoración* (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra, 1985).

¹³ Antonio Vallejo Triano, "La vivienda de servicios y la llamada Casa de Yâ'far", in *La Casa Hispano-Musulmana. Aportaciones de la Arqueología*, ed. Jesús Bermúdez López and André Bazzana (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, 1990), pp. 129–146.

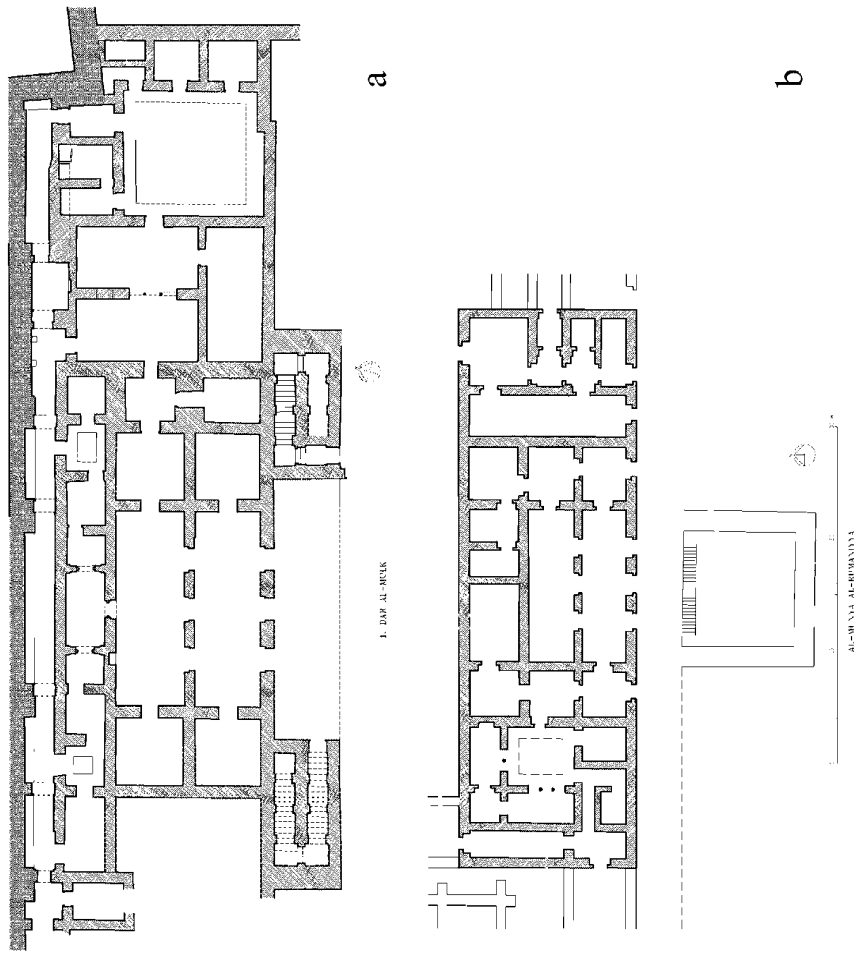


Fig. 2. Houses without courtyards: (A) Dār al-Mulk; (B) al-Munya al-Rummāniyya

with the next. The hall has two square rooms located at both ends. The next hall has a similar arrangement, with square chambers as well. The third hall is visibly much narrower and forms a small hall with two small chambers; these in turn provide access to two rooms which open onto two small courtyards. From these one is able to walk down a service corridor that separates the entire arrangement from the wall. Communication between the main hall and the small third hall was through a single arch, similar to those which provide access to the two rooms. Surfaces are decorated with panels of carved stone with the typical geometric designs and carved vegetal ornament. Perhaps the most outstanding elements of this ensemble are the pavements, made up of large tiles of fired clay of an intense red colour, alternating with smaller cut stones and stone strips, forming distinct square and chevron-patterned borders. The ceramic tiles with geometric designs of inlaid stone are equally outstanding (Colour Plate 2A).

The western side of this complex remains unexcavated, while the eastern side contains another ensemble of rooms organized around a courtyard which can be identified as a service area or as a more private zone. This courtyard lacks porticos but has a walkway or perimeter pathway and an entrance from the corridor next to the city wall. A latrine is located next to this entrance. On the eastern side there was probably a set of rooms, while on the western side there are two large rooms connected by a wall pierced by a triple-arched passage. These two rooms appear to be the result of a reconstruction which unified various rooms, judging by the fragmented character of its pavements. The easternmost hall has one doorway to the courtyard and another to a third room situated on the south side. The western hall is connected to the east bedroom of the central hall of the principal nucleus by a room in between. Another doorway provides access to the corridor adjacent to the city wall. As a result the door to the courtyard, the triple archway and the access doors to the central hall are aligned, forming an axis that possibly indicates the more important character of these rooms. The Dār al-Mulk's service quarter may be included within the following group of houses, those with courtyards and without portico, but because of their secondary character within the organization of the caliphal residence we considered it separately.

This residence constitutes a singular arrangement, whose closest parallel is the Munyat al-Rummāniyya, near Madīnat al-Zahrā' (Fig. 2b),

according to Velázquez Bosco's interpretation of the plan,¹⁴ and which also commands a vast perspective from the height of a terrace. According to our interpretation, the plan of the residence at al-Rummāniyya consists of two long halls arranged parallel to one another, with rooms at either end, connected to one another and to the exterior through triple-archways. In front of the halls is a wide platform with a pool, all of which look out over garden areas or cultivated areas organized in terraces. Behind the principal halls there is a hall with more private rooms, though these lack a courtyard to provide them with light and air. This zone is accessed from the rooms of the central hall. To this main nucleus, a type of private residence was attached at the western end, organized around a small courtyard without porticos. On the opposite side, there is a series of service rooms and another series of unexcavated structures.

A similar spatial organization is seen in the western side of the so-called Court of the Pillars (Patio de los Pilares), which will be described below (no. 17). However, this architectural configuration did not really continue, except for a possible reflection in the Alphonsine changes to the courtyard of the Alcázar of Seville.¹⁵

Houses with courtyards but without porticos

This type constitutes the most numerous group, at Madīnat al-Zahrā' and throughout al-Andalus. In the upper area immediately at the perimeter wall are three buildings of great size organized around large courtyards. Their location in the most peripheral section of the residential sector leads us to believe that they had a service function and were destined for a large number of people. The large size of the courtyard suggests that they were occupied by a group more numerous, and of a lower class, than the buildings described above. Of these, the

¹⁴ On the Muniyat al-Rummāniyya, which was destroyed to make way for the farmhouse which today occupies the site, see the contribution by Anderson in this volume. Ricardo Velázquez Bosco, who excavated the site, mentions spaces which were not reflected in his plan, leading us to conclude that he was not especially attentive to the archaeological details. As a result, we cannot verify the accuracy of the plan of al-Rummāniyya. See Ricardo Velázquez Bosco, *Medina Azzahra y Alamiyya* (Madrid: Junta para Ampliación de Estudios é Investigaciones Científicas, 1912); and Manuel Ocaña Jiménez, "La ruinas de Alamiyya, un yacimiento arqueológico erróneamente denominado", *Al-Qanṭara* 5 (1984), pp. 365–381.

¹⁵ Antonio Almagro, "El Patio del Crucero de los Reales Alcázares de Sevilla", *Al-Qanṭara* 20 (1999), p. 346 ff.

one situated furthest to the west has suffered the most damage, and as a result its reconstruction is the most problematic. It also occupies the most elevated position, mediating between the Residence of the Caliph (Dār al-Mulk) and the other buildings.

2. *Upper West Courtyard (Fig 3, no. 2)*

This dwelling is situated next to the Residence of the Caliph (Dār al-Mulk), although at a slightly lower level. It is difficult to interpret this structure, due to the level of destruction of the south zone of this building. Its plan is roughly trapezoidal, its courtyard paved with limestone, and it has halls on the three short sides. In contrast to the other two structures with similar characteristics situated further to the east, this dwelling is attached to the north wall of the medina. A latrine, accessed via a small passage entered from the courtyard, is located at its northeast corner. Adjacent to the latrine is another room paved with clay tiles. There is little else to say about this structure. The problem of access is especially confusing: the only point which could practically have been the entrance was the southwest corner, a site near the stair of the Court of the Pillars, at a lower level. This structure may have had a connection with that situated at its feet and with the Dār al-Mulk, which we also believe to have been accessible from this area.

3. *Upper Central Courtyard (Fig 3, no. 3)*

This building has a square plan with a large central courtyard and rooms on all four sides. It is separated from the previous dwelling by the street by which the aqueduct enters the palace. The courtyard has walkways around its perimeter and is paved with thick slabs of limestone. If it was indeed a dwelling, it had to have been a service quarter. It has a hall with two sleeping alcoves at the centre of the north side and an adjacent latrine, with other common latrines located at the far eastern end of this hall. We believe that it was accessed via the west, from the street which descends, at the point at which the levels of the courtyard and the street coincide, although the wall there has been reconstructed without space for a doorway.

4. *Upper East Courtyard (Fig 3, no. 4)*

This building is very similar to the previous one, although its east and west bays cover spaces corresponding to different points of access to the lower terrace. Its entrance may have been situated at the highest point of the street which descends to the presumed palace guard area,

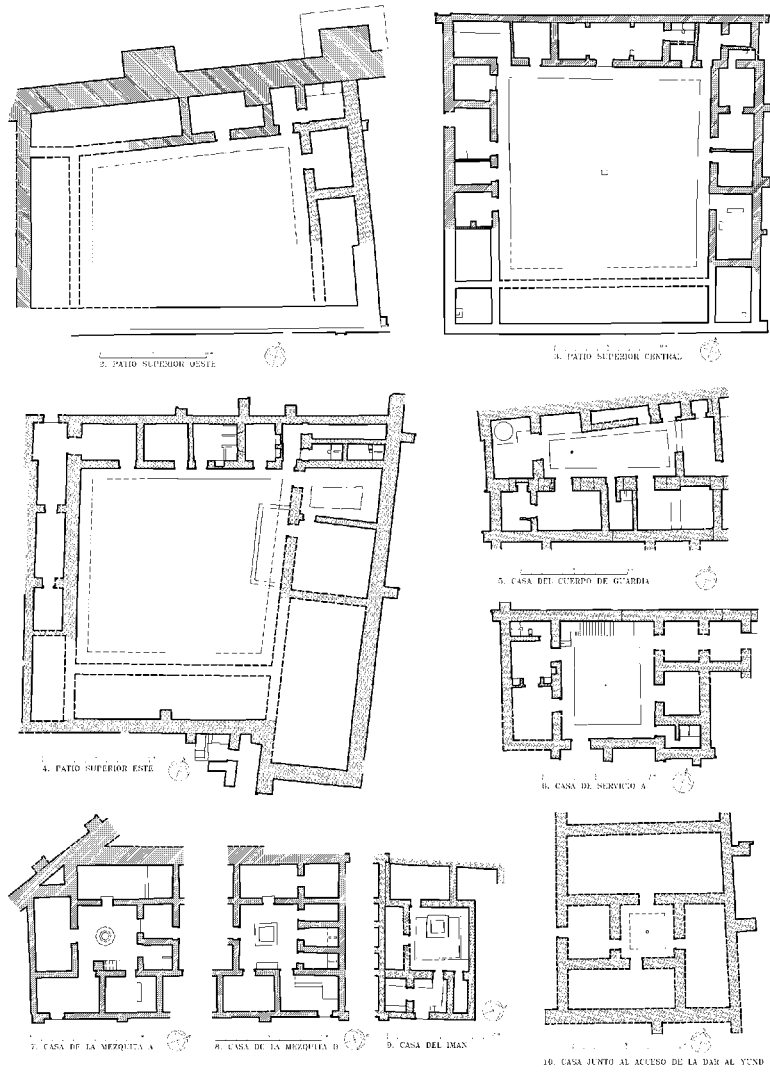


Fig. 3. Houses with courtyards but without porticos.

probably in the room at the corner. This dwelling also had latrines in the northeast corner, representative of a clear tendency which may have been motivated by the predominance of the local winds. In later modifications, a room was constructed within the courtyard. In the south side, at a lower level, there are the remains of a staircase that could connect this courtyard with that situated at its foot.

5. *House of the Bodyguard (Fig. 3, no. 5)*

This dwelling was constructed through the reconfiguration of what must have been a large courtyard with a porch, and which must have served as a façade and entrance to the group of houses which constituted the private residential zone at the foot of the central and eastern upper courtyards. In the far west of this courtyard is a house whose principal rooms occupy part of the pre-existing portico. At the far west is a room with a circular oven similar to that described in Service Quarter B (see no. 12 below). This room blocks access to the street which descends further to the west and includes a large door which opens onto the new courtyard. The courtyard is provided with walkways corresponding to a long trapezoidal plan. On its eastern side, two parallel walls form a vestibule with a bent entrance. On the south side there are two main halls, undoubtedly the principal ones of the residence, separated by a latrine. The westernmost hall has a lateral bedroom at its far west side. This house has been interpreted as the residence of the commander of the guard, although the presence of the oven in the westernmost room, the result of a rebuilding, leads us to think that this was a service residence destined for the preparation of food and to house those responsible for this duty.

6. *Service Quarter A (Fig. 3, no. 6)*

This structure, which we identify as a possible dwelling, actually functions as a zone for passing between the public area of the palace, and the residential structures which are integrated among other houses such as the Court of the Pillars (no. 17) and the so-called House of Ja'far (no. 14). The courtyard of this structure is square with walkways, but with halls on only the east and west sides. On the west side it has two connected rooms, one with a latrine at the far north, provided with a water basin. In the front bay, there is a latrine with a bent entrance passage, a simple room, and another which may have been a vestibule

possibly accessed from that of Service Quarter B (see no. 12, below). On the north side of the courtyard is a connected stair, which must have led to an upper floor of the eastern bay.

All of the dwellings described, along with those which we call Service Quarters B and C (see no. 13), must have accommodated servants of the palace. Some could be used as kitchens which would have provided food to other parts of the palace and other dependencies could have functioned as storage; officers of the court would have had their residences here as well. Their placement in an intermediate zone between the private residences of the palace—the houses of important officials, for whom the so-called House of the Small Pool (Casa de la Alberquilla, no. 15), and the House of Ja'far were destined—and the public zone confirms their use as residences for servants of the caliph and his court.

In the vicinity of the mosque, outside the palace enclosure proper, are three dwellings which must have accommodated people or activities related to the mosque. All of these correspond to the model of courtyard without porticos, and in their dimensions and forms constitute true archetypes of the Andalusí house at its simplest.

7. Mosque Service Dwelling A (Fig. 3, no. 7)

Situated in front of the mosque, this building follows the model of the simple Andalusí house. It possesses a square courtyard with a well in the centre. Access was through the south side, via a bent entrance passage. The main room is situated on the north side and has a bedroom at its east end. On the west side there is another hall of regular size while in the south bay there is a room next to the vestibule which must have been the kitchen. The east bay has two rooms: the southernmost was a latrine, and the second communicated with the adjacent dwelling. This house had an upper floor, probably above the bay of the entrance passage and the kitchen, judging by the presence of a stair located at the south side of the courtyard.

8. Mosque Service Dwelling B (Fig. 3, no. 8)

The function of this house is not completely clear, due to the presence of three narrow connected rooms, of which two can be interpreted as latrines. Nevertheless, we include the structure within the catalogue of dwellings because its structure is in every way identical to that of a house. Together with the previously described service dwelling, with which this one communicated, the two form a unified symmetrical arrangement. The dwelling was accessed through a bent entrance

passage, with a bench, and had a main room on the north side with a bedroom communicating with it through a doorway. In the centre of the courtyard there is a small pool. The aforementioned latrines are located on the east side, while a room which may have been the kitchen, and which is similar to the kitchen of the previously described dwelling, is located next to the vestibule. It is possible that this building was planned as a house and modified afterwards in order to serve the mosque, though this is not necessarily the case, given the independence between architectural form and function to which we alluded above.

9. *House of the Imām (Casa del Imán) (Fig. 3, no. 9)*

We have given this name to a small dwelling situated next to those described above, and therefore located opposite the main entrance of the mosque. It is an even simpler variant of residential architecture than the previous example, but is in every way characteristic of the Andalusi house. The dwelling is accessed via a bent entrance passage centred on the south side, with an adjacent small storage room and a latrine in the southeast corner. The main hall on the north side has neither a bedroom nor a sleeping alcove, while a room on the west side may have been the kitchen. The courtyard is organized with walkways around the entire perimeter, with a sunken central area for a garden, a small pool displaced to the north, and a canal separating the walkway from the sunken garden.

10. *Dwelling next to the entrance of the Dār al-Jund (Fig. 3, no. 10)*

Another possible house can be identified next to the entrance courtyard of the Dār al-Jund. The walls of this dwelling have completely disappeared, but the existence of a courtyard drain and the pavement of a room permit the reconstruction of its layout, which may have been organized around a square courtyard, with one main hall on the north side and others on the remaining sides. The dwelling was accessed via the large courtyard of the Dār al-Jund.

Houses with courtyards and one portico

This type seems to be that most clearly influenced by eastern architecture. It consists of a courtyard, more or less square, with a portico or ante-room/portico on one of its sides, in three cases oriented to the west. The halls are of the triple longitudinal type, although in two cases they were partially interrupted by later construction.

11. *Dwelling of the Dār al-Jund (Fig. 4, no. 11)*

This dwelling is located next to the reception hall of the Dār al-Jund and was accessed from its northwest corner, from the alley which separates the aforementioned hall from the city wall. It was also possible to access the dwelling via the spiral ramp situated next to the large eastern entrance portal, which provided access to the palace, and which we believe included the slope to the terrace of the aforementioned portico. The dwelling has a slightly rectangular courtyard with a portico composed of four square pillars on its north side. The main hall has a large gateway which appears similar to an *iwān*, and which could have been closed off from the exterior with the leaves of doors attached to its exterior façade. This dwelling is undoubtedly one of the most clearly eastern in flavour, due to its arrangement of three interconnected halls organized with their long sides conforming to the direction of the courtyard axis, recalling the Syrian *buyūt* and the Fatimid houses of Fustat.¹⁶ The dwelling includes a latrine between the lateral west hall and the entrance room, which could be accessed from both. It had one or two rooms on the east side. Later, an additional portico was added to the west side of the courtyard.

12. *Service Quarter B (Fig. 4, no. 12)*

This structure is situated in the residential nucleus of the palace and has two entrances, one at the north from the portico and courtyard (which was closed and divided much later) situated at the foot of the large upper courtyard, and another at the south through the general entrance to the service quarters. Both entrances have double bent vestibules with benches. The dwelling is organized around a square courtyard measuring seven metres a side, with walkways and with rooms on all four sides. The principal ones have a front portico with two openings separated by a central pillar (Colour Plate 2B). The main hall has a double entrance doorway, which prefigures the usual solution in twelfth-century houses. It is organized longitudinally and has another room parallel on its north side, communicating with the first via a doorway. Originally it must have had another bedroom on the south side which

¹⁶ See previous footnotes 7 and 8.

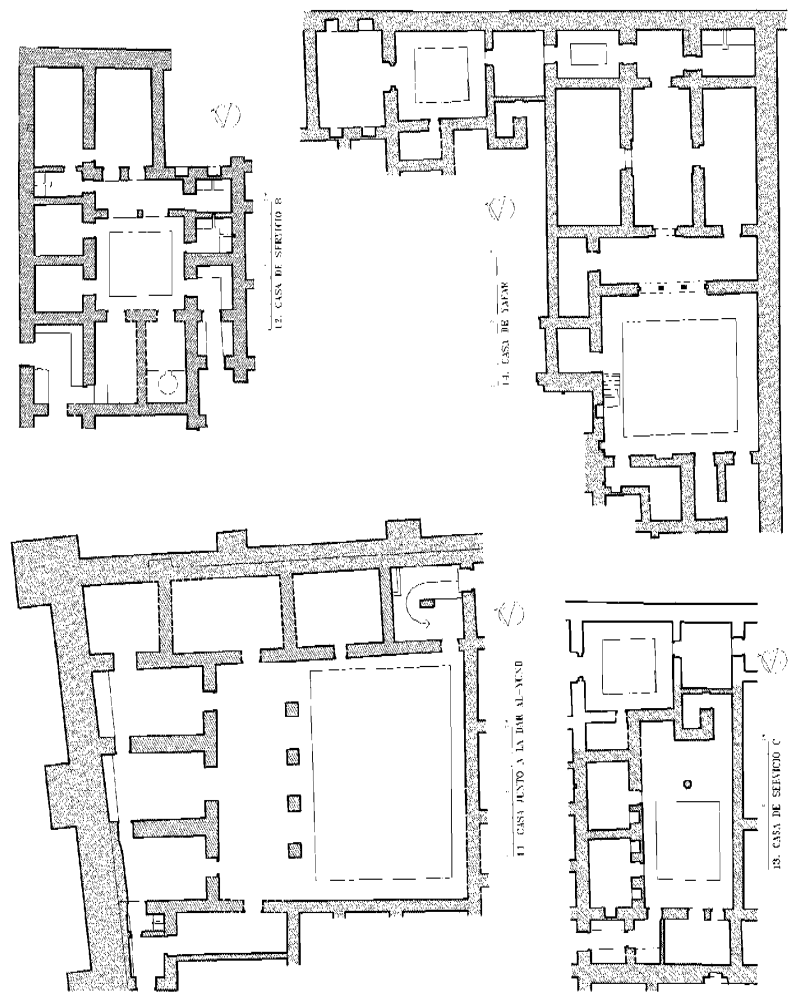


Fig. 4. Houses with courtyards and one portico.

later became the main bedroom of the so-called House of Ja'far when this sector underwent an important change.¹⁷

Two latrines are located at both far sides of the portico. The north side has two rooms with a doorway to the courtyard. Adjacent is the north bent entrance to the house, with benches at its sides. From this entrance passage and down two steps one arrives at another room on the western side, from which the courtyard was accessed. An adjacent room holds an oven, circular in plan and covered by a dome, indicating that the room must have functioned as a kitchen, not only for serving this dwelling, but for the palace as well. The south side also contains the aforementioned latrine of the far end of the portico, with another latrine with double seats (unique among those which we know at the palace). The presence of three latrines indicates that this was a building intended to serve the palace and used by a considerable number of people.¹⁸ The rest of the bay was occupied by the two southern vestibules provided with benches, and by another vestibule or outer passage shared with Service Quarter C.

13. *Service Quarter C (Fig. 4, no. 13)*

Service Quarter C has a slightly elongated courtyard provided with corresponding pavements, and surrounded by bays on three sides. To the south it borders directly on the so-called House of Ja'far, whose later construction supposes the occupation of part of the space of this dwelling. The eastern side, which had, as did the previous dwelling, a portico consisting of two openings supported by an octagonal pillar which must have led to the main halls of the residence, was enclosed by the construction of the private rooms of the House of Ja'far. The latrine which had been on the north side communicated with the next courtyard where it was incorporated into the new house. A new latrine with a bent entrance was probably located within the portico, but it is not likely that a direct communication between this dwelling and that of Ja'far existed. During later changes, the principal rooms remained on the north side with an opening directly to the courtyard and various niches in its walls. A room with a double door opening onto the

¹⁷ On the transformations to the palace at Madīnat al-Zahrā', see Vallejo's contribution in this volume.

¹⁸ Vallejo Triano, "La vivienda de servicios", p. 131.

courtyard was located on the west side, along with two consecutive bent entrance passages with benches.

14. *House of Ja'far (Fig. 4, no. 14, and Colour Plate 3)*

The so-called House of Ja'far is one of the richest and most interesting of al-Zahrā's dwellings. Judging by the decoration of its courtyard façade and by some of its organizational features, it was an important residence. It corresponds to an eastern tradition which did not influence the later Andalusī types. The residence was the result of an important rebuilding which affected a substantial part of the residential zone and which was accomplished by demolishing several rooms of other dwellings in order to create its singular organization. Access to the residence was through the south, an area whose destruction hinders any conjectures about its original arrangement. However, it appears that the entrance was not directly related to those of other dwellings in this part of the palace, nor with the adjacent bath. One entered the residence through a small corridor at the southwest corner of the courtyard. On one side is a small room, probably for a porter. Continuing on to the north, another larger room was segregated in order to construct one of the latrines of the nearby bath.

The square courtyard measures twelve metres per side. It was provided with walkways on each side, and paved with violet marble. The north side was occupied by a small room and by the wall of the bath, with a stair to an upper level located over the entrance bay. The façade of the reception hall (Colour Plate 3A), with a triple-arched entrance, is located on the eastern side of the courtyard. The entire façade arrangement, along with the door jambs, is distinguished by its fine carved geometric and floral stone ornament. Moving through the triple arch, one enters a hall/portico with a room located at its far northern end. In front of the entrance, but somewhat off-centre towards the north, an arched doorway provides access to the longitudinally-oriented main hall. On both sides two sleeping chambers of similar size and form are located at either end, connected to the hall through arched doorways. As previously noted, this model was not widely adopted in al-Andalus, and only at Madīnat al-Zahrā' do we find dwellings which adopted this plan (the other being the Dār al-Jund). Instead, the long hall, transversally arranged in relation to the courtyard, is the plan which later became widespread.

In the far end of the central hall an arched doorway gives access to the private zone of the dwelling. One nearly-square room serves for

circulation. Access to a latrine exists from the south while the north side communicates with a small courtyard with walkways.

From this courtyard one passes to a vestibule paved in red clay tiles with ornamental borders and thus arrives at a square courtyard provided with walkways, which opens onto what was no doubt the main bedroom of this residence (Colour Plate 3B). This room has four storage niches, two on each side and its arched doorway has two engaged columns. On the west side of the courtyard there must have been a door to a latrine. This entire section of the residence was built around various rooms and spaces to other houses. In addition, the main bedroom was constructed within the space that corresponds to the structure which we have termed Service Quarter B (no. 12), while the courtyard, latrine and interior vestibule were made at the cost of the so-called dwelling of Service Quarter C (no. 13).

Dwellings with courtyard and two porticos

15. *House of the Small Pool (Casa de la Alberquilla) (Fig. 5, no. 15, Colour Plates 4 and 5)*

The so-called House of the Small Pool is located south of the Court of the Pillars and is one of the most notable residences of the palace. This dwelling is the clearest precedent for the architectural type which we consider characteristic of the Andalusí house. With its rooms arranged around a courtyard garden with walkways, planting beds, and water channels, the residence consists of two front porticos preceding transverse halls, a courtyard with a central walkway, and a pool centred in front of the west portico (Colour Plate 4A). Situated at a much lower level than the Court of the Pillars and the street or corridor which separates them, it could be accessed via two joined stairs which descended from the street to the courtyard in a highly original arrangement, or from a passage which linked it with the adjacent bath and service quarters.

The north façade of the courtyard must have had a composition based on a set of blind arches in whose openings were arranged other doors covered with lintels, like the doorway of the aforementioned stairs, the doorway of some rooms situated under the stairs, and other doorways at the ends (Colour Plate 4B). The doorway on the right side opens onto a corridor which serves as another entrance to the courtyard from the passage which links the service quarters, and which also provides access to the adjacent bath.

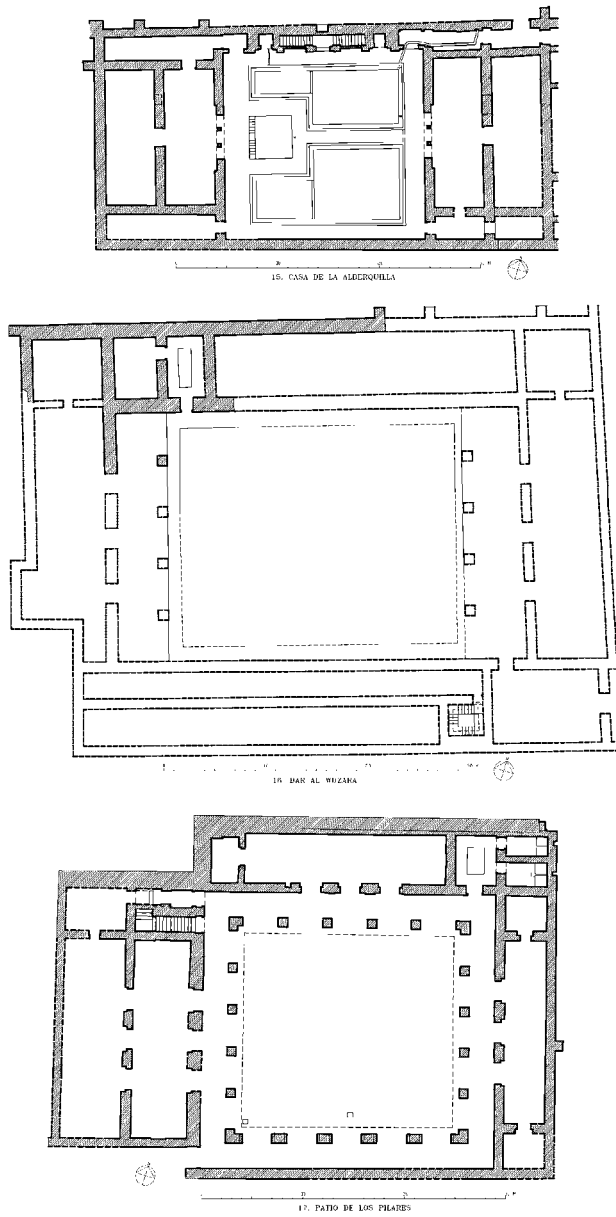


Fig. 5. Houses with courtyards and several porticos.

The main axis of the courtyard runs east-west; the triple-arched courtyard façades are richly decorated with carved stone panels. These arches had the leaves of doors attached on either side for closing the hall, judging from the remaining pivot holes. The arches are supported by two central columns but engaged columns are absent at its ends, a solution which seems more archaic than the use of engaged columns. These arches provide access to a hall-portico (Colour Plate 5) from which there is access to another parallel hall of similar dimensions through a simple doorway. These halls do not have bedrooms, strictly speaking, although small rooms or spaces exist at their ends, not always connected with the main halls. Some of the spaces might be latrines, like that of the south side of the east hall, under whose floor passes a sewer. On the exterior of the north side of this same hall is the access to the adjacent bath. On the west side of the dwelling is a small elongated room which occupies the north ends of the hall-portico and the main hall, and which was accessed from the former as well as from the courtyard. The extreme south of this side is much destroyed.

The arrangement of this courtyard is also an important model used in the domestic architecture of al-Andalus. The open space is slightly rectangular, although in an earlier design was possibly square before the construction of the double stair that communicates with the upper street and the Court of the Pillars. It has, as we have indicated, a square pool in front of the west façade, encircled by a walkway which connects to another running along the axis of the courtyard (Colour Plate 4B). Other similar walkways border the entire perimeter delimiting two large planting beds which differ in size, due to the construction of the stairs in the north side of the courtyard. As in other dwellings, an irrigation channel surrounds the planting beds. These channels are fed by one which enters via the communicating corridor with the bath and which emerges from the principal entrance of the city's aqueduct, which descends close to the nearby street.

The richness of its ornamentation and its direct relationship to the adjacent bath indicates that this was an important residence within the palace zone. The relationship between this residence and the adjacent bath calls into question the identification of the nearby residence as the House of Ja'far—an attribution based on epigraphic evidence found within the bath, and linked with textual evidence which cites the freedman Fā'iḳ's transfer to the residence in 971, at the order of

al-Ḥakam II and following the death of his *ḥājib* Ja'far.¹⁹ However, this dwelling has a much more direct relationship to the bath than does the so-called House of Ja'far, which does not seem to have been directly connected to the bath.

16. *House of the Ministers (Dār al-Wuzarā') or the Court of the Clocks (Patio de los Relojes) (Fig. 5, no. 16)*

The so-called Court of the Clocks is located south of, and at the same level as, the Dār al-Jund. Although nearly totally destroyed, it appears to have had an arrangement based on two transverse halls (on the east and west sides) fronted by pillared porticos. Access to the courtyard was from the east side, via a ramp which connected the eastern portico to the palace zone. The conserved pavements indicate the presence of a slightly higher eastern zone, which could correspond to the portico, and a large zone which occupied the area of the hall, but whose original extent can not now be distinguished. On the west side a pillar is conserved which allows us to imagine the form of the porticos. The hall that we think must have been located on this side of the building had to be partly resting on structures of the lower terrace corresponding to the reception hall of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III (the 'Salón Rico'). A ramp starting at the vestibule of the large east portico provided access to the courtyard and palace, and can be identified as the Bāb al-Sudda. A small courtyard at the north side is similar in form and arrangement to those preceding the latrines, suggesting the same function for the room on the court's northwest corner.

Due to its location between the Dār al-Jund and the great reception hall of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, with which it communicated easily via the rooms adjacent to the bath next to the reception hall, via the stair situated in the south side of the courtyard, we believe it could be the House of the Ministers (*Dār al-Wuzarā'*) mentioned in the Arabic chronicles.

¹⁹ Hernández Giménez, *Madīnat al-Zahra'*, p. 71.

Dwellings with courtyard and four porticos

17. *Court of the Pillars (Patio de los Pilares)* (Fig. 5, no. 17, and Colour Plate 6) Another important residential palace complex, organized around a large square, porticoed courtyard of twenty-four by twenty metres, is found southeast of the structures comprising the Dār al-Mulk. These porticos are supported by large square pillars of one by one metre each, with five openings, and paved with large stones of violet marble laid on a previous underlying pavement of limestone. The four porticos have walkways at a higher level with respect to the open space of the courtyard (Colour Plate 6A).

The courtyard is surrounded by halls on three of its sides. The south side seems to have been next to a street or general thoroughfare through which one could enter the building, though the degree of destruction does not allow us to see how. Regarding the singular arrangement of the courtyard, which constitutes a type not imitated in Andalusi residential architecture although it was used for other functions like storehouses (*funduqs*) or hospitals (*maristāns*),²⁰ the most significant aspect of this building is its halls, which fix the archetype of the hall of the dwellings and palaces of al-Andalus. They consist of reception halls with very elongated proportions, arranged transversally in relation to the axis of the courtyard, and with one or two alcoves at their ends. In this case, the halls open through three doorways communicating with the courtyard, marking the beginning of the path which leads first to two doors and then to the single arch. The bedrooms in this case were independent rooms, with a door to the hall. The north bay has a hall with only one bedroom at its far west. Hall and bedroom were paved with the same violet stone as the courtyard. At the east end there is a false door meant to give the appearance of an entrance to another bedroom. This space is occupied by a courtyard with walkways, accessed in reality from the main courtyard, which provides access to two latrines. On the east side of the building the hall had two symmetrical bedrooms which ultimately constituted the archetype of the main hall of Andalusi dwellings. This hall was paved with alabaster.

²⁰ Leopoldo Torres Balbás, "Las alhóndigas hispanomusulmanas y el Corral del Carbón de Granada", *Al-Andalus* 11 (1946) pp. 447–580; Antonio Almagro Gorbea and Antonio Orihuela Uzal, "El Maristán de Granada", *Boletín de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de Nuestra Señora de las Angustias* 10 (2003), pp. 80–109.

The main halls of the building are located on the west side of the courtyard, which present a structure similar in part to the Dār al-Mulk, with two parallel halls with a triple doorway providing access from the portico, as well as between the halls (Colour Plate 6B). The doors of this hall do not coincide with the axes of the openings of the courtyard portico. In the first hall false doors at either end simulate access to nonexistent bedrooms. In the inner hall a door on the north side communicates with a second room, which in turn is accessed from the courtyard through a passage which starts from the northeast corner. The destruction in this zone makes it impossible to say if a bedroom existed on the south side.

A stair near the northwest corner of the courtyard ascends around a central wall with supporting arches. It is unclear whether this stair provided access to a second floor occupying all or part of the building, or if it only communicated with the zone situated at the foot of the Dār al-Mulk. Significantly, two vertical channels in the wall near the northeastern latrines indicate the existence of two other latrines on the upper floor. This suggests that at least the northern side of the building may have had an upper floor. This dwelling is the largest residential structure of those excavated at Madīnat al-Zahrā³ and the most original, due to its four-portico arrangement. This is a type which does not appear again in al-Andalus, except at the Palacio de los Leones at the Alhambra.²¹ Its residential-type halls with bedrooms suggest that it functioned as accommodation for important visitors, or as a setting for celebrations which took place outside the gatherings held in other large reception halls, notably the Eastern Hall of the Upper Terrace ('Salón Rico').

CONCLUSION

The dwellings discussed in this article offer a complete inventory of residential architecture which illuminates the later development of the Andalusí house. It seems that the types which we consider to be of Eastern origin (dwellings with a series of adjacent halls, all oriented longitudinally), and of elaborate and complex spatial arrangement,

²¹ Antonio Orihuela, *Casas y Palacios Nazaríes*, pp. 103–116. On the Court of the Pillars, see also Vallejo's contribution in this volume.

were not developed further in al-Andalus. Instead, Andalusis opted for the simplest architectural solution, the house with transverse halls. In any case, while the archaeological evidence does not provide new residential types dating before 936, the distinctive houses of the palace of Madīnat al-Zahrā' are fundamental to understanding the origin and development of Andalusī residential architecture.²²

²² This project was carried out with the assistance of research project PB87-0225 granted from the Ministry of Science. The proposed reconstructions were created by Miguel González according to the hypothesis of the author.

VILLA (MUNYA) ARCHITECTURE IN Umayyad Córdoba: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Glaire D. Anderson

INTRODUCTION

Little survives of the sprawling Umayyad metropolis of Córdoba described by medieval authors like Ibn Ḥayyān and Ibn Ḥawqal.¹ However, archaeological excavations conducted in the last few decades offer an increasingly important source of information about the Umayyad capital. Ongoing excavations at the palace-city of Madīnat al-Zahrā', for example—focusing recently on the city's residential sectors and infrastructure—offer the most dramatic illustration of the increasing importance of material evidence to the study of this medieval city.² At Madīnat al-Zahrā' today, visitors can examine the remains of houses, baths, roads, walls and waterworks.³

¹ Al-Maqqarī draws on texts by al-Bakrī, Ibn al-Farādī, Ibn Sa'īd, Ibn Ḥawqal, and Ibn Bashkuwāl, for example, in the description of Córdoba which makes up the fourth book of his *Nafh al-Ṭīb*. Al-Maqqarī, *Analectes sur l'histoire et la littérature des arabes d'Espagne (Nafh al-Ṭīb)*: ed. de la primera mitad del *Nafh al-tib* de al-Maqqarī (ed. completa, Bulaq, 1279 h) ed. R. Dozy, G. Dugat, L. Krehl, W. Wright (Leiden: Brill, 1855–1860), Vol. I, pp. 298–462.

² Recent research on the Umayyad palace city appears in *Actas de las IV Jornadas de Madīnat al-Zahrā': Nuevas investigaciones sobre el Califato de Córdoba: Córdoba, 10–12 noviembre 2003* (Sevilla: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura, 2004), and is ongoing in the journal *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrā'*, 1987–. In general see Antonio Vallejo Triano, *Madīnat al-Zahrā': Guía Oficial del Conjunto Arqueológico* (Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura, 2004); D. F. Ruggles, “Madīnat al-Zahrā'”, in *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 2000), pp. 53–85. Antonio Vallejo Triano, “El Proyecto Urbanístico del Estado Califal: Madīnat al-Zahrā'”, in *La Arquitectura del Islam Occidental* (Lunwerg Editores S.A., 1995), pp. 69–81; Antonio Vallejo Triano, “Madīnat al-Zahrā': The Triumph of the Islamic State”, in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, ed. Jerrilyn Dodds (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), pp. 27–41; Felix Hernández Giménez, *Madīnat al-Zahrā': Arquitectura y Decoración* (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra, 1985).

³ See Manuel Acíen Almansa, “Madīnat al-Zahrā' en el urbanismo musulmán”, *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrā'* 1 (1987), pp. 11–26. On the water system, see Carlos Flores Sancristobal et al., *El Aprovechamiento del Sistema de Saneamiento en Madīnat al-Zahrā'*, Cuadernos de Intervención en el Patrimonio Histórico, no. 6 (Córdoba: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura y Medio Ambiente, Delegación Provincial de Córdoba, 1991).

In contrast to the gradual process of excavation and reconstruction taking place at the palace-city, other Umayyad sites found in and around Córdoba, and revealed during emergency excavations, have already disappeared beneath new development. These now only survive in the pages of archaeological reports published in outlets such as the *Anuario Arqueológico de Andalucía* and local academic journals, and in bits and pieces of stone, brick and pottery stored away in the warehouse of the Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico de Córdoba. The prolific local scholarship based upon such material evidence is published mainly within Spanish specialist circles, and as a consequence has yet to be integrated into the broader field of Islamic architecture.

MUNYA REMAINS IN CÓRDOBA

Ibn Ḥayyān and other Andalusī authors tell us that the Umayyad villas were the settings for hunting excursions, drinking parties and court feasts, celebrating occasions such as circumcisions and weddings, but what can they tell us about the architecture of the *munya*?⁴ As is typical of medieval Arabic historiography in general, the Andalusī authors provide very little concrete information about the appearance of buildings to which they allude. Furthermore, in the centuries since the disintegration of Umayyad hegemony, the *munyas* have largely disappeared from the landscape: there is not a single villa still standing in Córdoba. It is this gap in our knowledge which the material evidence, fragmented as it is at present, can begin to address. The ruins of walls, water systems, architectural ornament, and pottery unearthed along the Guadalquivir river, in the new residential suburbs and fields which stretch west of the present-day city, provide a preliminary picture of

⁴ On the *munya* as the setting for court activities see Anderson, *The Suburban Villa (munya) and Court Culture in Umayyad Cordoba (756–976 C.E.)*, Ph.D. diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2005, pp. 149–89. On the *munya* in general, see Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, pp. 35–52; Christine Mazzoli-Guintard, *Ciudades de al-Andalus: España y Portugal en la Época Musulmana* (Granada: Editorial al-Andalus y el Mediterráneo, 2000), pp. 220–21; Luis Ramón-Laca Menéndez de Lúcar, *Simbiosis arquitectura-paisaje. Evolución de los contornos de cuatro ciudades (Córdoba, Toledo, Sevilla y Granada)*, Ph.D. diss., Politécnica de Madrid. Escuela de Arquitectura, 1998, p. 39; Leopoldo Torres Balbás, *Ciudades hispanomusulmanes. Vol. 1 Historia e Instituciones; Organización de las ciudades; las calles. Vol. 2 Las defensas urbanas*, with introduction and conclusion by Henri Terrasse (Madrid: Instituto General de Relaciones Culturales / Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura, 1985 ed.), pp. 136–43; Christian Ewert, *Die Aljafería in Zaragoza* (Berlin/Madrid: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut/Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1978), I, p. 4, n. 19–22.

munya architecture, and of the estates' place in the urban scheme of greater Umayyad Córdoba.

Archaeologists working just beyond the city's walled core have unearthed remains of extramural development which encircled the medieval urban centre and which suggest Córdoba's greatest extent. Cemeteries have been found within a kilometre of the city's western wall and on the bank of the Guadalquivir opposite the Great Mosque. The remains of streets, houses, mosques and baths comprising extramural quarters have been excavated to the north and west of the walled centre, to a distance of about four kilometres.⁵ By far the most evidence for the extramural expansion of the city is to be found west of the urban centre. Remains have been excavated in the territory beginning just outside the western wall, and extending in a rectangle westwards along the bank of the river for nearly thirteen kilometres, and northwards from the Guadalquivir for about five kilometres, as far as the Sierra Morena. It is in this western suburban zone that Madīnat al-Zahrā' is located, and in which archaeologists have uncovered the most material evidence for *munya* architecture (Fig. 1).

Since no definitive chronology exists for the remains which have so far been unearthed, it is perhaps best to study the *munyas* according to their location, beginning with the sites closest to the walled centre, then proceeding west along the bank of the Guadalquivir, and ending with remains located in the foothills of the Sierra Morena. At the site located closest to the urban centre, archaeologists excavating a tenth-century suburb about one kilometre south-west of the city wall (within the present-day municipal zoo) encountered the traces of an Umayyad *munya* which predated the suburb.⁶ The archaeologists posit that the caliphal suburb developed around the *munya* (dated broadly between 756 and 923), whose traces can be identified in walls, foundations, and

⁵ María Teresa Casal García, "Los cementerios Islámicos de Qurtuba", *Anuario Arqueológico Cordobés* 12 (2001), pp. 283–313. For an overview of recent archaeological discoveries of extramural development, see Antonio Arjona Castro et al., *Urbanismo de la Córdoba Califal: Tras las Huellas de la Córdoba Califal* (Córdoba: Edición de la Posada, 1997), pp. 17–20, though note that the identification of the remains with specific Umayyad sites is unconvincing based on the evidence presented.

⁶ Dolores Ruiz Lara and Juan Francisco Murillo Redondo, "Resultados de la intervención arqueológica realizada en el zoológico municipal de Córdoba", *Anuario Arqueológico de Andalucía: Informes y Memorias (AAA)* (1996), pp. 123–42, especially p. 142. Evidence of fire and numerous abandoned, but whole, glass and ceramic vessels indicates that occupation of the site ended suddenly and violently in the eleventh century, which they take to support textual descriptions of the turmoil which accompanied the *fitna*.

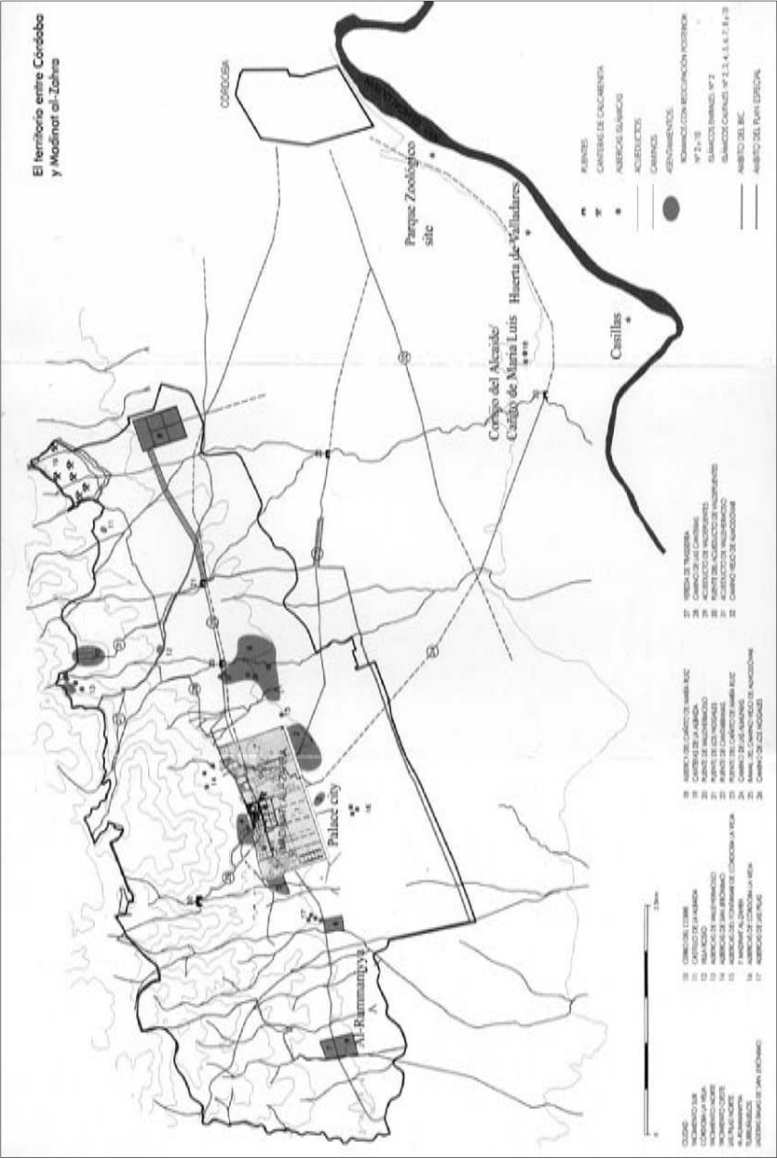


Fig. 1. Map of Córdoba's western suburban zone with approximate locations of *munya* remains marked with *. Courtesy of the Conjunto Arqueológico de Madīnat al-Zahrā', and after Antonio Vallejo Triano, *Madīnat al-Zahrā': Guía Oficial del Conjunto Arqueológico* (Junta de Andalucía: Consejería de la Cultura, 2004).

a series of ramps, stairs and terraces connecting the site to the river, as well as ceramic and other material remains. The *munya* itself was apparently constructed upon the remains of a second-century Roman suburban villa oriented towards the Guadalquivir. While the remains revealed little about the plans of either the Roman villa or the *munya*, they provide evidence for continuity between Roman and Umayyad sites which is largely absent in the textual sources, and lend material support to medieval texts which imply that early *munyas* served as foci for the development of the caliphal city's extramural quarters.⁷

Moving westwards along the river, three sites—the Huerta de Valladares, the Cortijo del Alcaide, and Casillas—indicate that a series of residences, richly-ornamented and oriented towards the Guadalquivir, extended along the riverbank to a distance of approximately three kilometres from the city walls (Fig. 1). The Huerta de Valladares and Cortijo del Alcaide were identified as *munyas* in 1949 and 1956 respectively, on the basis of *in situ* remains and fragments of architectural ornament which had been unearthed on the sites. They have never been properly excavated, and there is no information available regarding the plans of these structures. However, the remains of architectural ornament found at the sites indicate that the structures were constructed and decorated with materials and a visual vocabulary familiar from court buildings at Madīnat al-Zahrā'.⁸

In a 1949 article about the Huerta de Valladares, located about three kilometres from the south-west corner of Córdoba's walled centre, Rafael Castejón described standing walls, extant pavements, and the remains of carved stone architectural ornament which were then still

⁷ The *munyat* 'Ajab, for example, which is referenced in the Latin version of the Calendar of Córdoba. See Reinhart Dozy, ed., *Le Calendrier de Cordoue*, Medieval Iberian Peninsula Texts and Studies, no. I, trans. Charles Pellat (Leiden/New York: E. J. Brill, 1874, 1961 ed.), pp. 110–111.

⁸ I am grateful to María Dolores Baena Alcántara, Director of the Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico de Córdoba, and María Jesús Moreno for access to the materials excavated at these and other presumed *munya* sites. These rich materials, including epigraphic fragments, await systematic analysis and publication. To these fragments may be added approximately fifty fragments in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, to which Mariam Rosser-Owen has recently drawn my attention. Preliminary examination of the V&A fragments suggests a close relationship in material and decoration to those in the Museo Arqueológico de Córdoba, but comparative analysis of the V&A fragments with those in Córdoba is necessary to establish whether they originated at Madīnat al-Zahrā' or from one or more of the other Córdoba sites.

visible at the site.⁹ Castejón concluded that the dimensions of stone blocks found there could be compared to construction (presumably at the Great Mosque) carried out under al-Manṣūr, while he judged the incised vegetal ornament on the stone fragments to be comparable in quality and technique to those discovered at Madīnat al-Zahrā'. Although there is no documentation of excavations from this period, the numerous fragments from the site housed in the Córdoba Archaeological Museum invite comparison with Umayyad and 'Āmirid architecture and ornament (Fig. 2).

A series of carved stone panels—most in the form of discrete rectangular panels which would have served as pieces in larger compositions, but two of which feature carved panels framing open arches—was unearthed in 1956 at the nearby Cortijo del Alcaide, located just west of the Huerta de Valladares (Colour Plate 7A). Felix Hernández Giménez, the archaeologist who directed the first systematic excavations at Madīnat al-Zahrā', compared the quality and style of the Cortijo del Alcaide panels to al-Ḥakam II's additions to the Great Mosque of Córdoba.¹⁰ More recently, Christian Ewert has dated the panels to the end of the Umayyad reign, possibly the 'Āmirid period, based on analysis of their decorative vocabulary.¹¹ Based on the high quality of the carved stone panels, Hernández, Castejón and others have suggested that the remains at the Cortijo del Alcaide could be those of the Umayyad estate, Dār al-Nā'ūra ("Palace of the Waterwheel").¹² While the distinctive Umayyad horseshoe arches with alternating red and white voussoirs, and the rectangular fields of carved vegetal orna-

⁹ Despite Castejón's desire that the Valladares site be excavated, little if anything further was accomplished there. Material evidence from the site is now housed in the collections of the Museo Arqueológico in Córdoba. See Rafael Castejón and Martínez de Arizala, "Vestigios de alcázares musulmanes", *Suplemento al Boletín de la Real Academia de Córdoba de Ciencias, Bellas Letras y Nobles Artes (B.R.A.C.)* 20 (1949), pp. 213–22; and Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, p. 119.

¹⁰ See Felix Hernández Giménez, "La Munya al-Nā'ūra y su Exploración", *Madīnat al-Zahrā': Arquitectura y Decoración* (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra, 1985), pp. 176–82.

¹¹ Christian Ewert, "Die Dekorelemente des Spätumayyadischen fundkomplexes aus dem Cortijo del Alcaide", *Madridrer Mitteilungen* 39 (1998), pp. 356–532; in Spanish as "El arte omeya andalusí en su última fase: El Cortijo del Alcaide", in *La Península Ibérica y el Mediterráneo durante los siglos XI y XII: II. Almanzor y los terrores del milenio* (Palencia: Fundación Santa María La Real, Centro Estudios del Románico, Monasterio de Santa María la Real, 1999), pp. 111–131.

¹² Rafael Castejón, "Los Monumentos Árabes de Córdoba: Excavaciones en el cortijo El Alcaide. Dar al-Naura?", *Al-Mulk: Anuario de Estudios Arabistas* 1 (1959–60), pp. 163–66.



Fig. 2. Fragments from the Huerta de Valladares, in the Museo Arqueológico Provincial, Córdoba.

ment, which characterize the Alcaide panels share obvious similarities with the decorative vocabulary of the reception hall of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, the residence of the caliph (Dār al-Mulk), and the House of the Small Pool (Casa de la Alberquilla) at Madīnat al-Zahrā’, such a precise identification of the site is at best premature. While analysis of the epigraphic fragments unearthed at the Alcaide site, and others in and around Córdoba, may provide information about dating and patronage, the remains need not be those of any particular Umayyad estate to be of interest. What is important about these sites is the material support they lend to medieval Arabic texts which allude to the location of numerous *munyas* near the Guadalquivir.

A handful of other sites immediately surrounding the present-day city have also yielded remains of decorated buildings, pottery and glassware, all of which await cataloguing and analysis of their decorative vocabulary and, in some cases, epigraphic fragments (Colour Plate 8). Without further investigation into these materials, however, it is difficult to say more about them beyond the fact that in materials and decorative technique they appear consistent with remains of architectural ornament

unearthed at Madīnat al-Zahrā'. Nevertheless, plotting the general find-spots for such materials on the map of present-day Córdoba gives a preliminary idea of how these complexes were distributed across the landscape of greater Umayyad Córdoba (Fig. 1).¹³

Casillas, located just over three kilometres from Córdoba's south-western corner, is the most-recently identified of the *munya* sites. Excavated between 2001 and 2002, it also provides more information regarding the plan of these riverine sites than the Huerta de Valladares or Cortijo del Alcaide.¹⁴ Casillas had two Islamic phases, the earlier of which dates to the ninth or early tenth century, and whose remains consist of the residential portion of a larger complex which stretched northwards from the river. Walled on the east and south sides (perhaps for protection against possible flood periods), like the remains discovered at the municipal zoo site, the Casillas *munya* was connected to the river below by means of a structure whose precise character has yet to be clearly understood. However, traces of walls, foundations, mouldings, friezes and pavements, as well as common cooking and food storage vessels, indicate that this was a large courtyard residence. Rooms were arranged around an irrigated interior garden surrounded by porticos and decorated with carved marble ornament.

The courtyard arrangement conforms to the picture of Umayyad domestic architecture as revealed by excavations conducted in tenth-century suburbs located west of the walled centre.¹⁵ Ranging in area from 85 to 200 square metres, the excavated houses of Córdoba share

¹³ Textual evidence suggests that *munyas* were divided across the Córdoba landscape roughly along ethnic/social lines, with estates of the Umayyads and their freedmen located west of the urban centre and those of the Arab and Berber aristocrats located east of the urban center (including al-Manšūr's palace city al-Madīnat al-Zāhira). See Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape and Vision*, p. 125, and Anderson, *The Suburban Villa*, pp. 119–48.

¹⁴ The second phase of occupation, dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, indicates that the residence became an industrial site for ceramic production after the Umayyad period, paralleling the subdivision and incorporation of industrial functions which occurred in Roman villas elsewhere in late antiquity. The excavation was conducted under the auspices of the Confederación Hidrográfica del Guadalquivir: see Gloria Galeano Cuenca, *Informe-Memoria Intervención Arqueológica de Urgencia, Yacimiento "Casillas"* (T. M. Córdoba) (Córdoba: Confederación Hidrográfica del Guadalquivir (Vías y Construcciones-OHL), 2002). The excavation report is filed in Córdoba's municipal archives.

¹⁵ On the excavations of thirty-eight Umayyad-era houses conducted between 1991 and 2000 at the site known as Cercadilla, see Elena Castro del Río, "La arquitectura doméstica en los arrabales de la Córdoba califal: la Zona Arqueológica de Cercadilla", *Anales de Arqueología Cordobesa* 12 (2001), pp. 241–281.

the arrangement of rooms around a central rectilinear courtyard (usually square, but sometimes rectangular or trapezoidal), accessible through an entrance passage, and containing a pool, basin or well in the courtyard space. All the houses were constructed along a north-south axis, and are characterized by a courtyard with a water feature, a rectangular room opening onto the courtyard and functioning as the main living and reception space, and an entrance hall. The houses vary in the combination of other rooms that might be present—for example, reception halls, bedrooms, latrines, kitchens, storage areas and stables appear in a number of combinations—but, in all of them, the central court is the organizing feature of the residence.¹⁶

The most significant *munya* remains uncovered to date are those at the site known as al-Rummāniyya.¹⁷ Unlike those discussed previously, it is not located along the riverbank, but in the foothills of the Sierra Morena, a short distance west of Madīnat al-Zahrā'. Al-Rummāniyya is the only *munya* for which a plan can be reconstructed, along with remains *in situ*, fragments of carved stone decoration and other material evidence, and a relatively firm identification based on epigraphic and textual evidence.¹⁸ Excavated in 1911 by the archaeologist Velázquez Bosco, shortly before he began the first systematic excavation of Madīnat al-Zahrā', al-Rummāniyya's remains consist of four rectangular terraces that ascend the slopes of the mountain range, and which measure approximately 160 by 150 metres overall (Fig. 3). Velázquez Bosco described the site as follows:

[The *munya*] occupies an area of about 4 hectares, at the foot of the Sierra, some nine kilometres from Córdoba... The terrain was levelled in order to construct the complex, which is divided into four horizontal terraced platforms, the whole of which is surrounded by a strong wall that is partly preserved. The perimeter wall is composed of a plinth of three or four rows of masonry, upon which alternating stone and concrete

¹⁶ On the courtyard dwellings at Madīnat al-Zahrā', see Almagro's contribution in this volume.

¹⁷ See Ibn Ḥayyān, *Al-Muqtabis fī akhbār bilād al-Andalus*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahmān 'Alī al-Hajjī (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1965), pp. 106–107. For the material remains, see Ricardo Velázquez Bosco, *Medina Az Zahra y Alamiya* (Madrid: Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas, 1912); for overview and bibliography, see Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape and Vision*, pp. 111–18.

¹⁸ Manuel Ocaña Jiménez, "Las ruinas de 'Alamiría', un yacimiento arqueológico erróneamente denominado", *Al-Qantara* 5 (1984), pp. 367–82.

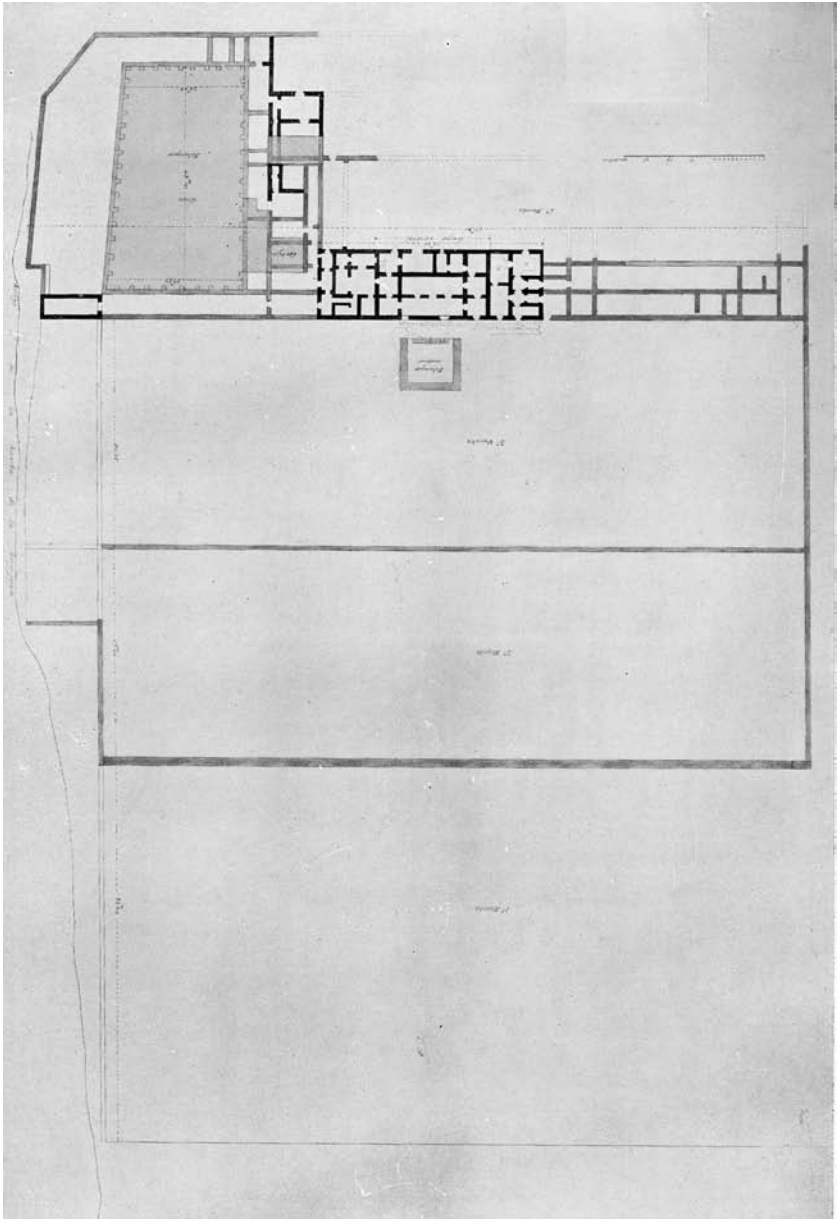


Fig. 3. Plan of al-Rummāniyya, showing the terraces and extent of the grounds around the *munya*; after Velázquez Bosco, *Medina Azzahra y Alamiriya*.

courses were constructed. Thick stone retaining walls support the three upper terraces, and may also have supported defensive walls...¹⁹

The walls of the four terraces are still visible, as is a monumental pool located on the uppermost terrace (Fig. 4).²⁰ Velázquez Bosco observed that al-Rummāniyya's materials, construction techniques and decoration were comparable to those at Madīnat al-Zahrā' (Fig. 5).²¹ The uppermost terrace of al-Rummāniyya featured a structure which Velázquez Bosco interpreted as the estate's residence (Fig. 3), seeming to parallel the reception halls, houses and pools located on the upper two terraces of Madīnat al-Zahrā'. He described the plan of the central portion of the structure as follows:

The palace is composed of one or more courts surrounded by narrow halls. The central body of the palace is very regular in distribution, and is composed of three parallel rectangular chambers of equal width. These are crossed by two walls, which divide them into square rooms at their extremes. These square rooms were probably barrel-vaulted, and connect to other rectangular chambers flanking the central composition.²²

Arranged on an east-west axis, oriented towards the south, and measuring approximately fifty metres wide by fifteen metres deep, the front façade of al-Rummāniyya's residence opened onto a paved patio from which stairs descended to the terrace below. The plan of the residence can be read as a tripartite arrangement in which a central double hall is flanked on either side by what appear to be residential suites. As at the so-called Residence of the Caliph (Dār al-Mulk) at Madīnat al-Zahrā', two wide rectangular halls, arranged one in front of the other, form the central portion of the plan (see Almagro's Fig. 2 in this volume for a comparison of the two plans). These two halls (each measuring 15 metres by 5 metres, and 75 square metres, slightly smaller than those

¹⁹ Velázquez Bosco, *Medina Azzahra*, p. 23.

²⁰ The German Archaeological Institute in Madrid commenced investigations at the site in January 2006 by documenting the visible remains. Excavations and soil analysis are planned, which it is hoped will yield more information about the site's history, architecture and functions.

²¹ Based on the similarities in arrangement and siting between al-Rummāniyya and Madīnat al-Zahrā', Ruggles sees the estate as evidence of the palace-city's profound influence on the architecture of contemporary palaces: see Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape and Vision*, p. 118.

²² Velázquez Bosco, *Medina Azzahra*, p. 23. Ruggles describes the plan of al-Rummāniyya and provides the historiographical background for its attribution in *Gardens, Landscape and Vision*, p. 114.



Fig. 4. (A) al-Rummāniyya, lower terrace walls; (B) al-Rummāniyya, monumental pool, upper terrace.



Fig. 5. Sculptural fragments recovered from al-Rummāniyya; after Velázquez Bosco, *Medina Azzahra y Alamiyya*.

of the Dār al-Mulk) were divided from one another by a wall pierced by three openings. This arrangement is mirrored in the front façade of the residence, which also opened to the exterior through three arched doorways (an arrangement found in houses excavated at the palace-city as well).²³

Again as at the Dār al-Mulk, al-Rummāniyya's residence features square chambers flanking the central double hall to the east and west, and measuring approximately 4 by 5 metres each. These flanking chambers can be read as two separate residential suites, as can the rectilinear chambers that extend around and behind the double hall to the north. The western suite appears to be the more private and extensive of the two.²⁴ Moving northward, the second chamber of the

²³ On which see the contributions of Vallejo and Almagro in this volume.

²⁴ Of the four chambers directly adjacent to the central double hall, only the first chamber opens onto the central portion of the residence. In contrast, both of the

western suite provides access to a group of four rooms arranged around a small courtyard, in what appears to be another residential unit. From this small courtyard a passage leads to two rooms on the extreme west end of the residence, which provides exits to the west and north. On the east side of the al-Rummāniyya plan, a series of five chambers forms what appears to be a second residential suite, but without access to the rooms that occupy the far eastern end of the al-Rummāniyya block. Instead, the five-chamber suite is completely separate from a long rectangular passage (probably a service corridor) that extends along the entire depth of the residence's block. This passage in turn opens onto six interconnected chambers whose function is unclear.

The plan of al-Rummāniyya's residence, so similar to the Dār al-Mulk at Madīnat al-Zahrā', raises more questions about *munya* architecture than it answers. How are we to interpret the striking double-hall arrangement, which so far finds its only parallel in the Residence of the Caliph? Perhaps the plan arose to accommodate the convivial gatherings centred around the enjoyment of food, drink, music and poetry, to which the Arabic texts allude.²⁵ Might al-Rummāniyya's plan reflect the aspirations or high court status of its patron, the *fatā* Durrī al-Ṣaghīr, whom texts tell us was one of the highest-ranking freedmen in the court of al-Ḥakam II?²⁶

Indeed, the richness of the decoration which survives from al-Rummāniyya and the other sites points to the court as the likely source of patronage for these residences. For instance, Velázquez noted that the interior surfaces of the residence at al-Rummāniyya were covered with stucco up to a height of half a metre, and painted red with white horizontal bands, with patterns or epigraphy apparent in some places.

flanking chambers that form the first two spaces of the eastern suite of rooms open onto the central halls.

²⁵ See Anderson, *The Suburban Villa*, Chapter 6, pp. 149–189, and the contributions of Robinson and Rosser-Owen in this volume.

²⁶ On al-Rummāniyya, Durī al-Ṣaghīr and other *fityān* as *munya* patrons see Anderson, *The Suburban Villa*, Chapter 5, pp. 119–148. On these court elites, see Mohamed Meouak, “Prosopography of political elites and the sociography of the Umayyad State of Cordoba”, *Medieval Prosopography* 23 (2003), pp. 167–184; Meouak, *Pouvoir Souverain, Administration Centrale et Élités Politiques dans l'Espagne Umayyade (II^e–IV^e/VIII^e–X^e siècles)* (Tuusula, Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1999); Meouak, “Les ‘marges’ de l’administration hispano-umayyade (milieu II/VIII–début V/XI siècles): prosopographie des fonctionnaires d’origine Ṣaqlabī, esclave et affranchie”, *Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus* (Homenaje a José Ma. Fórneas), VI, ed. Manuela Marín (Madrid: CSIC, 1994), pp. 305–336.

Unfortunately, he did not reproduce images of this decoration in his publication. However, painted wall decoration of this type is visible at Madīnat al-Zahrā' and at the Umayyad bath recently excavated west of the Great Mosque of Córdoba in the present-day Campo Santo de los Mártires (Fig. 6). Likewise, the floors of al-Rummāniyya's residence were paved with red and white marble laid in parallel bands and rectangular tiles, again similar to the residences at Madīnat al-Zahrā' (see Colour Plate 2A).

Velázquez discovered only a few fragments of architectural decoration during his excavation of al-Rummāniyya, but what they lack in quantity they make up for in interest. Consisting of a volute, part of a column capital, an epigraphic fragment, and two rectangular portions originally from larger friezes or borders, these fragments indicate that the decorative programme at al-Rummāniyya was characterized not only by the ubiquitous fields of vegetal ornament common to Umayyad architectural decoration, but by the frequent presence of animals (Fig. 5). The birds, dogs, lions and rams which appear within the leafy vines and scrolls of the Rummāniyya fragments constitute a striking departure from the tiny number of figural motifs found among the innumerable fragments of ornament at the caliphal palace-city. Since figural imagery is so rare in the architectural ornament at Madīnat al-Zahrā', Castejón interpreted this peculiarity as evidence that al-Rummāniyya had been appropriated by an 'Āmirid patron after the death of al-Ḥakam II in 976, when al-Manṣūr ruled al-Andalus as regent to al-Ḥakam's young son and successor Hishām.²⁷

However, while it is the case that animal figures are more or less absent from the decoration found to date at Madīnat al-Zahrā', they certainly are present in other, more-familiar, Umayyad objects. The al-Rummāniyya fragments, with their combination of foliage and figural imagery, parallel the combination of animals and vegetation

²⁷ Rafael Castejón, "Alamiría", *B.R.A.C.* 25, no. 70 (1954), pp. 150–158. Like Velázquez Bosco, Castejón believed that al-Rummāniyya could be identified with al-'Āmiriyya, a *munya* belonging to al-Manṣūr, and Castejón ascribed the decorative fragments to the 'Āmirid period based on the proliferation of animal themes. It is likely, if Castejón's stylistic judgement stands, that the *munya* passed into the hands of al-Manṣūr, or a favoured member of his family or administration during his rule as *ḥājib* in the final years of the Umayyad caliphate, and that the pieces found there were additions to the estate from this period. Mariam Rosser-Owen has addressed the issue of 'Āmirid patronage in *Articulating the Hijāba: 'Āmirid Artistic and Cultural Patronage in Al-Andalus (c. 970–1010 A.D.)*, unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, 2004. See chapter 3 for a discussion of architectural patronage.



Fig. 6. (A) Painted wall decoration, Madīnat al-Zahrā'; (B) Painted dado, excavated bath, Córdoba (Campo Santo de los Mártires).

which distinguish the ivory caskets produced at al-Ḥakam's court.²⁸ Like the ivories, the *munyas* were luxuries associated with the highest court circles. The unusual combination of animal and vegetal motifs present in the al-Rummāniyya fragments may therefore indicate that the figural, agricultural and court motifs so strikingly depicted on the surface of the ivory caskets also appeared on the walls of the private spaces of luxurious court villas.

THE ROLE OF WATER

Belying the relative silence of Arabic texts on the visible remnants of Córdoba's pre-Islamic past, recent archaeological excavation reveals that Córdoba's Roman water infrastructure was refurbished and expanded by the Umayyads, and thus was an important factor in the urban development of the capital.²⁹ In 967, under al-Ḥakam II, the city's Fontis Aureae aqueduct was repaired and reused to fill ablutions basins at the Great Mosque of Córdoba.³⁰ Earlier, the Aqua Augusta, which had fed more than 100 public fountains and more than 300 houses in the first century, had been refurbished by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III to supply Madīnat al-Zahrā'. It is logical to suppose that Córdoba's Roman aqueduct system was also an important factor in the siting and development of the Umayyad estates. Al-Maqqarī, quoting Ibn Sa'īd, provides a glimpse of this relationship in an anecdote about the construction, during the reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, of an aqueduct which provided water to Dār al-Nā'ūra.³¹ When Ibn Sa'īd notes that the aqueduct, and the enormous pool into which its waters poured, via a statue in the shape of a lion, was among the most significant ancient monuments of the kings of the past (due partly to the magnificence of

²⁸ For recent perspectives on the ivories see the *Journal of the David Collection* 2 (2005), nos. 1 & 2, for the publication of *The Ivories of Muslim Spain*, papers from a symposium held in Copenhagen from the 18th to the 20th of November 2003.

²⁹ On the Roman aqueduct which was refurbished to bring water to Madīnat al-Zahrā', see Vallejo's contribution in this volume.

³⁰ See Ángel Ventura Villanueva, *El Abastecimiento de Agua a la Córdoba Romana. II: Acueductos, Ciclo de Distribución y Urbanismo* (Córdoba: Servicio de Publicaciones, Universidad de Córdoba: 1996), pp. 185–86.

³¹ The Arabic term used is *qanāt*, which of course refers to a quite different type of hydraulic system. I translate *qanāt* here as aqueduct, however, because Ibn Sa'īd goes on to describe the Córdoba water system as "one engineered for water to flow along a path atop an arcade (*al-hanāya al-maq'ūda*)". See al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-Ṭīb*, Vol. I, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār Sadir, 1968), p. 564, lines 18–20.

its construction and height), he seems to offer a rare medieval reference to the city's pre-Islamic past.³²

Water used both pragmatically and decoratively is ubiquitous in the archaeology of the *munya* sites. The most striking evidence for the role of water in the overall conception of the *munya* appears at al-Rummāniyya, where a monumental pool (measuring 49.7 by 28 by 3 metres deep, with a capacity of 1372 cubic metres) is located north-west of the pavilion on the upper terrace. Miquel Barceló, who has studied Andalusi water systems, found that al-Rummāniyya's pool was fed by a reservoir and aqueduct (both subterranean) located north of the residence.³³ The drainage system in turn conducted water from the pool to the lower terraces. In addition to serving as a reservoir from which to irrigate the estate's terraces, its unusual depth, considered with the textual references to great fishponds at Madīnat al-Zahrā' during the reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, suggests that al-Rummāniyya's pool provided the estate's patron with fresh fish for the table.³⁴ Velázquez Bosco speculated that the pool's massive perimeter buttresses might once have supported a suspended walkway above the surface of the water.³⁵ Ruggles has commented on the recreational and aesthetic character that such a walkway would have lent the pool, and we can indeed imagine the pleasure which a tenth-century resident or visitor might have taken in traversing its perimeter, perhaps catching glimpses of the fishes in the water inches below.³⁶

³² "This aqueduct, and the pool and lion fountain into which its waters flowed, were among the most significant ancient monuments of the kings of the past age, considering the distance the aqueduct traversed, the changes in direction that it had to make, the magnificence of the construction, and the height of its towers, which raise the water within them so that the water continues to flow correctly": al-Maqqarī, *Naḥḥ al-Ṭīb*, vol. I, p. 565, lines 5–7 (my translation).

³³ Miquel Barceló Perello, "Proyecto de Excavación Arqueológica Yacimiento: al-Munya al-Rummaniyya", unpublished report, Archivo Municipal de Córdoba, 1993; and Miquel Barceló, Helena Kirchner and Carmen Navarro, *El Agua Que No Duerme: Fundamentos de la arqueología hidráulica andalusí* (Granada: El Legado Andalusi, c. 1995), p. 95.

³⁴ The Arabic term *birka*, used to refer to *munya* pools, is also used to refer to fishponds. According to Manuela Marín, the inclusion of many fish recipes in the later cookbook of Ibn al-Razīn al-Tujībī seems particular to an Andalusi/Maghrebi culinary context: see Manuela Marín, "Beyond Taste: the complements of colour and smell in the medieval Arab culinary tradition", in *A Taste of Thyme: Culinary Cultures of the Middle East*, ed. Sami Zubaida and Richard Tapper (London: Tauris Parke, 2000), pp. 205–214, especially p. 206.

³⁵ Velázquez Bosco, *Medina Azzahara*, p. 23.

³⁶ Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, p. 116.

While al-Rummāniyya boasts the largest and best-preserved *munya* pool, evidence of water tanks has been found near the Cortijo del Alcaide, as well as at a number of other sites in the countryside surrounding Madīnat al-Zahrā'. The remains of one such pool at the Cortijo del Alcaide display a clear ornamentality, with the inner surfaces of the pool walls decorated with interlacing arches (Colour Plate 7B).³⁷ Pools were sometimes incorporated into the courtyards of tenth-century Córdoba suburban houses, and also appear in the court residential zone at Madīnat al-Zahrā'. The pool in the courtyard of the House of the Small Pool (Casa de la Alberquilla), for instance, features two sets of steps descending to the water's surface, paralleling a similar arrangement excavated in the courtyard of a large tenth-century Córdoba residence located west of the walled centre.³⁸

Ibn Sa'īd's account, related by al-Maqqarī, of the aqueduct at Dār al-Nā'ūra also contains a description of a marvellous fountain and pool that marked the arrival of the water at the estate, revealing how *munya* water features were designed for dramatic effects:

...The water flowed into a great pool (*birka* 'aẓīma), which had a statue of a great lion ('*alayha asadun* 'aẓīmun al-šūra)...A more splendid creation did not exist among all the works of the kings of the past (*fi-mā šawwara al-mulūk fi ḡhabir al-dahr*). The waters that spilled forth from this lion could water all the gardens of the palace, despite their great extent, before its surplus overflowed and ran down into the Guadalquivir.³⁹

Small ornamental water basins, if not nearly so theatrical as that of al-Nā'ūra, are also associated with the Córdoba *munyas*.⁴⁰ At al-Rummāniyya alone three basins were unearthed between 1920 and

³⁷ I am grateful to Antonio Vallejo Triano for directing my attention to the tank and its decoration.

³⁸ On the Casa de la Alberquilla, see Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape and Vision*, p. 72, and Almagro's contribution in this volume. Might the large suburban residence excavated west of Córdoba at the Cercadilla site have been a *munya*? Its size and level of elaboration distinguish it from the surrounding houses, which may have developed around it later. The majority of the houses excavated at Cercadilla were provisioned simply with a well, while others contained water basins approximately two metres in length and arranged along the dwelling's north-south axis. This type of pool appears in one of the illuminations of the manuscript *Bayād wa Riyād*, on which see Cynthia Robinson, *Medieval Andalusian Courtly Culture: the 'Hadīth Bayād wa Riyād'* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2006).

³⁹ Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Tīb*, Vol. I, pp. 564–65 lines 1–4 (my translation).

⁴⁰ On the tenth-century basins, see *El Esplendor de los Omeyas Cordobeses: La civilización musulmana de Europa Occidental*. Exhibition catalogue (Granada: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura, El Legado Andalusi, c. 2001), pp. 149–153.

1950. The first was found by workmen in 1926; it measures $0.95 \times 0.68 \times 0.26$ metres, and is decorated with acanthus leaves and lions' and rams' heads (Fig. 7).⁴¹ Its unusual appearance led Henri Terrasse to argue that the basin was a pre-Islamic piece, an opinion that Castejón contested in later articles.⁴² In 1945, twenty years after the discovery of the first basin, workmen discovered a second marble basin at the site, similar in some respects to the earlier find (Fig. 8).⁴³ The new basin was smaller than the first, measuring $0.68 \times 0.52 \times 0.18$ metres, and featured a similar, but more complex decorative scheme, depicting whole figures of lions or leopards, rather than just their heads, together with the same acanthus leaves as the earlier piece.⁴⁴ Archaeologists did not record the exact locations at which these basins were unearthed, making it impossible to determine what the relationship of the basins to the architectural or garden spaces might once have been.⁴⁵

The notion of the display and visual celebration of water in Córdoba residences is reflected in another group of water basins excavated at Córdoba, or attributed to the city during the caliphal period. One of these is in the Museo de la Alhambra in Granada, a white marble basin (measuring $0.42 \times 0.62 \times 0.15$ metres) whose rim is decorated with two scrolling, interlaced vines, while its long sides are decorated with a symmetrical arrangement of large vine scrolls flanking a central

⁴¹ The marble basin was discovered when a group from the Córdoba Commission of Monuments visited al-Rummāniyya, citing concern for the site in the face of new construction which the proprietor of the estate was undertaking. The Commission's report also mentions their desire to investigate rumours circulating around Córdoba in the wake of Velázquez Bosco's early excavations at the site that al-Manṣūr's *munyat* al-Āmiriyya, known from textual evidence, had been discovered. Rafael Castejón, "Las ruínas de Almiría", *Anales de la Comisión Provincial de Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos* (Madrid, 1926), pp. 17–21.

⁴² Henri Terrasse, *L'art hispano-mauresque des origines au XIII^{ème} siècle* (Paris: G. van Oest, 1932); Rafael Castejón, "Nueva pila almanzoreña en Córdoba", *B.R.A.C.* 20, no. 61 (1949), pp. 235–240; and Castejón, "Almiría".

⁴³ Castejón, "Nueva pila", pp. 235–240.

⁴⁴ Castejón, "Nueva pila", pp. 235–240. He related these two basins to a third located in the courtyard of a house in the eastern zone of the walled urban centre. This third basin was larger ($1.05 \times 0.67 \times 0.30$ metres) than the al-Rummāniyya basins, but Castejón wrote that it was similar in ornament to the other two, with acanthus leaves and other vegetal motifs, as well as a sculpted lion's head serving as an outlet for water.

⁴⁵ In 2003, the staff of the Museo Arqueológico were not aware of the existence of any records or archival materials relating to Velázquez Bosco's or Castejón's excavations.



Fig. 7. (A) Large basin excavated at al-Rummāniyya, in the Museo Arqueológico Provincial, Córdoba; (B) Detail of design on the al-Rummāniyya basin's exterior.



Fig. 8. (A) Small basin excavated at al-Rummāniyya, in the Museo Arqueológico Provincial, Córdoba; (B) Detail of design on the small basin's exterior.

pinecone.⁴⁶ Not all surviving Córdoba basins are rectangular or feature decoration on exterior faces. For example, in the collection of the Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico in Granada is a round, lobed basin of white marble (0.65×0.25 m) devoid of ornament, apart from an epigraphic band around the rim which states that it was made for the caliph al-Ḥakam in 970–71, under the direction of the elite freedman Jaʿfar. Might this basin once have decorated a Córdoba *munya*?⁴⁷

Clearly, water was central to the *munya* as an architectural type in Umayyad Córdoba. The incorporation of water into domestic/palatial architecture, as well as the emphasis on water infrastructure in the broader landscape, finds some parallels with the archaeological evidence for water systems in or around Umayyad *quṣūr* and the pools and infrastructure in and around the palaces of Abbasid Samarra. The Roman architecture of the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa may also provide parallels. In any case, the success of water elements as part of a larger architectural ensemble in Umayyad Córdoba is certain. We see the echoes of the *munyas*, with their great pools and carved fountains, in the later palaces of al-Andalus (most famously the Alhambra and Generalife) and the *agdal* of North Africa.

CONCLUSION

In contrast to the remains at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, becoming increasingly visible thanks to ongoing excavation and reconstruction, we can only imagine the appearance and architecture of the *munyas* based on the meagre evidence available, which tends to suggest more questions than answers about these sites. What is clear is that the *munyas*, unsurprisingly, share close affinities with Umayyad court and residential

⁴⁶ See *El Esplendor de los Omeyas Cordobeses*, p. 152, for description and bibliography.

⁴⁷ *Arte islámico en Granada: propuesta para un Museo de la Alhambra: 1 de abril–30 de septiembre de 1995, Palacio de Carlos V, La Alhambra* (Granada: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura: Patronato de La Alhambra y Generalife: Comares Editorial, 1995), pp. 269 (cat. no. 66); Dario Cabanelas Rodríguez, “La pila árabe del Museo Arqueológico de Granada y la Casa del Chapiz”, *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos* 29–30 (1980–81), pp. 21–34. To these Córdoba pieces we can perhaps add two more basins which Mariam Rosser-Owen believes are ‘Amirid objects: a sandstone basin in the Museo de la Alhambra which is shallow and square, measuring 0.086×0.30 m; and a rectangular limestone basin in the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla, measuring $0.19 \times 0.55 \times 0.32$ m: for illustrations of both (and bibliography), see *El Esplendor de los Omeyas Cordobeses*, pp. 149–150, and Rosser-Owen, *Articulating the Hijāba*, vol. II, cat. nos. 24 and 25.

architecture of the tenth century. The archaeology allows us to detect walled estates whose residences were oriented towards the south, which were connected, via actual structures or through panoramic views, to the Guadalquivir or to the fertile landscape of the river valley. Rooms, decorated with painted dadoes and carved stone panels, and capitals featuring motifs of lush vegetation and animal figures, along with pavements decorated with geometric patterns, opened onto interior courtyards or outward-looking terraces enhanced with pools and fountains.

Munya plans conform to two types: the first is in keeping with residential architecture found throughout the Mediterranean, with rooms organized around a central courtyard. The second, consisting of the unusual double hall arrangement found at al-Rummāniyya and the Residence of the Caliph at Madīnat al-Zahrā', finds no close parallels in the architecture of contemporary Islamic palaces. Neither the *bayt* system of the Umayyad *qusūr* in Syria, the conglomerations of chambers and courts of Abbasid court architecture at Samarra, Persian palaces, nor the reception halls of the North African courts, suggest fruitful parallels. How then do we interpret the *munyas*' divergence from expected models and contexts amongst their Islamic contemporaries? Not unexpectedly, the Roman villas of Iberia and North Africa offer the closest parallels. Al-Rummāniyya's plan may find its predecessors in the rectangular hall plans of Roman villas such as the Villa de Murias de Beloño (Oviedo) and Villa de Centroña (La Coruña) in present-day Spain, and in the villas depicted in the Tabarka and Lord Julius mosaics of North Africa.⁴⁸ The similarity between the North African villas depicted in the mosaics and the Generalife of Nasrid Granada is striking: are the *munyas* of Córdoba the mediating link between the antique and later Islamic villa traditions?

Generally speaking, the *munya* might best be understood as the hybrid offspring of late antique Mediterranean villa architecture—particularly that of Iberia and North Africa—on the one hand, and the tastes (in culinary and convivial practices, fashions, etc.) characteristic of interna-

⁴⁸ On the Roman villas of Spain, see María Cruz Fernández Castro, *Villas Romanas en España* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes, Archivos y Bibliotecas, 1982); on the villa mosaics of North Africa, see Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); and Tadeusz Sarnowski, *Les Représentations de Villas sur les Mosaïques Africaines Tardives* (Warsaw: Zakład narodowy im. Ossolinskich, 1978).

tional Islamic court culture in the tenth century, particularly that of the Abbasid court.⁴⁹ Only further excavation and sustained studies of the material and textual (including epigraphic) sources can begin to answer the many questions which the *munyas* of Córdoba raise. Certainly, the picture of Umayyad villa architecture sketched here is a preliminary one. Nevertheless, this discussion shows the necessity of revising and expanding the long-standing notion of the Córdoba *munya* as mere pleasure garden. Scholars have long characterized the *munya* thus, based on allusions to them in the Andalusí poetry produced after the disintegration of Umayyad hegemony in the early eleventh century.⁵⁰ However, perspectives from other disciplines—economic, agricultural and landscape, and architectural and urban history, for instance—suggest a more nuanced interpretation is necessary.⁵¹ As historians of Andalusí agriculture have emphasized, cultivation was a central function of the Umayyad suburban estates.⁵² I have argued elsewhere that *munya* agriculture was keyed to the needs of the Umayyad court, with estates serving as sites of intense cultivation for the production of a whole variety of fruits, vegetables, fragrant flowers, herbs and shrubs.⁵³ These were consumed and displayed in the form of elaborately-prepared dishes and

⁴⁹ Anderson, *The Suburban Villa*, pp. 149–89.

⁵⁰ For example, *munya* are characterized as “lieux de plaisance” in the classic work by Henri Pèrès, *La Poésie Andalouse en Arabe Classique au XI^{ème} siècle: ses Aspects Généraux et sa Valeur Documentaire* (Paris: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient, Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1937), pp. 121–57, especially p. 119.

⁵¹ As characterizes the work of Ruggles and Menéndez de Larcía on landscape and urban history (see notes 1 and 4 above), and James Dickie’s work on Andalusí gardens: see James Dickie, “The Hispano-Arab Garden: Notes towards a Typology”, in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 1016–1035; Dickie, “Gardens in Muslim Spain”, *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1 (1986), pp. 78–83; Dickie, “The Islamic Garden in Spain”, *The Islamic Garden* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1976), pp. 87–105.

⁵² For instance, Expiración García Sánchez and Ángel López y López, “The Botanic Gardens in Muslim Spain”, in *The Authentic Garden: A Symposium on Gardens*, ed. L. Tjon Sie Fat and E. de Jong (Leiden: Clusius Foundation, 1990), pp. 165–176; and Vincent Lagardère, *Campagnes et Paysans d’Al-Andalus (VIII^e–XV^e S.)* (Paris: Edit. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1993), pp. 51–58.

⁵³ Anderson, *The Suburban Villa*, Chapter 3, pp. 74–96. On Andalusí culinary culture, see David Waines, “The Culinary Culture of al-Andalus”, in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, vol. 2, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 725–738; Lucie Bolens, *La Cuisine Andalouse, un Art de Vivre: XI^e–XIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1990); Expiración García Sánchez, “Fuentes para el estudio de la alimentación en la Andalucía Islámica”, *Actas del XII Congreso de la U.E.A.I.* (Málaga-Madrid, 1984–1986), pp. 269–288; Rachel Arié, “Remarques sur l’alimentation des musulmans d’Espagne au cours du Bas Moyen Âge”, *Cuadernos de Estudios Medievales* 2–3 (1974–75), pp. 291–321.

perfumes during court activities held at the estates, so that the choice of *munya* crops was dictated by their culinary, pharmaceutical and cosmetic utility, and rooted in international Islamic notions of refinement.⁵⁴

As was true of the villas of late imperial Rome, the emphasis on the agricultural functions of the *munya* was closely linked to the social life of court elites.⁵⁵ Medieval authors who wrote for the Umayyad administration make it clear that in addition to their agricultural roles, *munyas* were valued as places of leisure and recreation (*nuzah*). For example, speaking of the estate known as Dār al-Nāʿūra, founded in the ninth century by the *amīr* ʿAbd Allāh, Ibn Ḥayyān reports that the ruler founded a marvellous estate on a vast plot of land (*anshaʿaha munya ʿajba wāsiʿa al-khiṭṭa*), and that while he intended it to serve as a place of delight (*arāduhā liʿl-furja*), he nevertheless enlarged the villa's lands (*awṣʿua khiṭṭa*) and increased its cultivation (*akthara ghirāsā*).⁵⁶ Likewise, in a brief passage which nevertheless provides the most detail about an estate, the same author tells us that the *munya* of a powerful Umayyad freedman in the tenth century encompassed a residence, irrigated gardens (*al-basātīn al-masqā*) and other cultivated lands (*al-arāḍīn al-mazruʿa*), as well as riding animals and/or cattle (*thawr*), which would have been used for hunting, and may imply some level of animal husbandry as well.⁵⁷

In addition to its relevance to the history of Andalusī agriculture and social history, the Córdoba *munya* also represents an important facet of Umayyad secular architecture.⁵⁸ Despite the difficulties inherent in

⁵⁴ On this topic, and the functions of luxury objects as containers for such substances, see Renata Holod, "Luxury Arts of the Caliphal Period", in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, ed. Jerrilyn Dodds (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), pp. 41–47. On medieval Islamic notions of refinement, see Anderson, *The Suburban Villa*, Chapter VI.

⁵⁵ On villa production as linked to the concerns of Roman elites, see Nicholas Purcell, "The Roman villa and the landscape of production", in *Urban Society in Roman Italy*, ed. Tim J. Cornell and Kathryn Lomas (New York, 1995), pp. 151–179.

⁵⁶ Ibn Ḥayyān, *Al-Muqtabis, tome troisième: Chronique du Règne du Calife Umayyade ʿAbd Allah à Cordoue, texte arabe*, ed. Melchor M. Antuña (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1937), pp. 38–39.

⁵⁷ Ibn Ḥayyān, *Al-Muqtabis fi akhbār bilād al-Andalus*, pp. 106–107.

⁵⁸ On Andalusī houses, see the contributions by Vallejo and Almagro in this volume, and Julio Navarro Palazón, "The Andalusī House in Siyāsa: Attempt at a Typological Classification", in *Patterns of Everyday Life, The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, no. 10 ed. David Waines (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2002), pp. 43–66; André Bazzana et al., ed., *Maisons et Espaces Domestiques dans le Monde Méditerranéen au Moyen Âge, Castrum*, no. 6 (Madrid/Rome: Casa de Velázquez/École Française de Rome, 2000); *Casas y Palacios de Al-Andalus: Siglos XII–XIII* (Madrid/Barcelona: Lunwerg Ediciones,

attempting to reconstruct long-vanished buildings from fragmentary material evidence, the Córdoba *munya* as revealed through archaeology and texts offers rich possibilities for investigating relationships between Córdoba architecture and urbanism, landscape, and Umayyad court society.

1995); André Bazzana, *Maisons d'al-Andalus: Habitat Médiéval et Structures du Peuplement dans l'Espagne Orientale* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1992); and Jesús Bermúdez López et al., eds., *La Casa Hispano-Musulmana: Aportaciones de la Arqueología* (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, 1990).

PART II

READING THE REGENCY

POEMS IN STONE: THE ICONOGRAPHY OF ‘ĀMIRID
POETRY, AND ITS ‘PETRIFICATION’ ON
‘ĀMIRID MARBLES

Mariam Rosser-Owen

In recent years, Islamic art historians have become increasingly concerned with the relationship between text and image in art, concluding that the text which adorns an object is no less the result of deliberate choices on the part of the maker than the pictorial representations which may comprise its main decoration; furthermore, that the text can often aid in the interpretation of the image. Another kind of text which opens up avenues for the interpretation of artistic imagery is contemporary poetry. It provides evidence for the cultural milieu in which an object was created, especially in the cases where the art and literature share the same patron. The employment of shared imagery can suggest the meanings which an object's decoration would have evoked in the minds of its contemporary audience. The comparative study of contemporary works of art and literature can thus provide a means for the interpretation of artistic iconography. In this article I argue that this approach likewise illuminates the meanings of a small group of objects made for a dynasty whose role as patrons has hitherto been neglected in the art historiography of al-Andalus—the ‘Āmirids (976–1010).

The founder of this dynasty, al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ‘Āmir, is best-known to history as the warrior who led twice-yearly campaigns against the Christian kingdoms in the north of the Peninsula, and as the usurper of the legitimate authority of the third Umayyad caliph, Hishām II (976–c. 1030).¹ Al-Manṣūr became regent (*ḥājib*) in 976, when Hishām

¹ A number of recent books, published around the year 2002 to coincide with the thousandth anniversary of al-Manṣūr's death, recapitulate the history of his regency, and provide comprehensive bibliography: see especially Virgilio Martínez Enamorado and Antonio Torremocha Silva, *Almanzor y su Época* (Málaga: Editorial Sarriá, 2001); and Laura Bariani, *Almanzor* (San Sebastián: Editorial Nerea, 2003). My doctoral thesis includes a survey of the political history of the ‘Āmirid period: see Mariam Rosser-Owen, *Articulating the Ḥijāba: ‘Āmirid Artistic and Cultural Patronage in al-Andalus, circa 970–1010*. Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, 2004, chapter 1.

succeeded his father al-Ḥakam II as a minor, and over the next thirty-four years al-Manṣūr consolidated his own position to the extent that the caliph was utterly eclipsed. On his death in 1002, he was succeeded in quick succession by his two sons, ʿAbd al-Malik and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, before racial tensions and power struggles led to the outbreak of *fitna* in 1010. Their dynasty came to act as caliphs in all but name, and one important way in which they articulated their royal role was through cultural and artistic patronage.

During this long period of ʿĀmirid *de facto* rule, the regents were careful to engage in the kinds of patronage which suited the rulers of a great state. However, they were so demonised by later historiography, both Muslim and Christian—as much for their part in holding back the Christian conquests as for their perceived usurpation of caliphal prerogatives—that their contributions to the flourishing culture of al-Andalus have, until recently, never been considered.² If anything, al-Manṣūr has been seen as an *anti*-cultural figure, a military dictator with a taste for ostentatious piety, and a desire to appeal to the religious conservatism of the Mālikī jurists who dominated in al-Andalus. In modern historiography, al-Manṣūr has been seen in the light of the famous dictators of the twentieth century, and in Spanish scholarship it is not uncommon to find him referred to by words, such as “caudillo” and “generalísimo”, which are usually reserved for Francisco Franco (1936–1975).³

This emotive historiography has hindered the development of an academic framework within which to consider the contributions of the ʿĀmirid dynasty to the art history of al-Andalus. However, al-Manṣūr was the only non-royal patron to add an extension to the Great Mosque of Córdoba, which was also the largest ever added to that monument;

² This, however, is the subject of my D.Phil., *Articulating the Hijāba*. Other recent studies on aspects of ʿĀmirid culture include Cynthia Robinson, *In Praise of Song: the Making of Courtly Culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1005–1134 A.D.* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), chapter 2, especially pp. 105–124, 133–140, 261–272, 371–395; and Sophie Makariou, “Quelques réflexions sur les objets au nom d’ ʿAbd al-Malik ibn al-Manṣūr”, *Archéologie Islamique* 11 (2001), pp. 47–60.

³ For example, an historical novel written in 1946 by Luis Antonio de Vega (*Almanzor*), drew explicit parallels between the two “beneficent dictators”. Enamorado and Torremocha (*Almanzor y su Época*, p. 51) quote a passage from this book: “Almanzor era un gran patriota, luchaba por su España, antes que nada por su España, y como era un gran político, sabía que para la felicidad de un país son más importantes las victorias sobre los enemigos de dentro que sobre los enemigos de fuera, y aún más, que no es posible obtener triunfos sobre el enemigo exterior si el interior no es fuerte”.

and he constructed a palace-city comparable in scale and magnificence to the caliphal capital at Madīnat al-Zahrā'. The meaning and implications of such monumental construction by a man who had not actually inherited his right to rule have not been critically examined; there is no space here to discuss 'Āmirid architectural patronage, but it should be noted that by choosing to appropriate royal architectural forms such as the palace-city, and to construct at the royal monument *par excellence*—that is, the Umayyads' dynastic mosque in Córdoba—al-Manṣūr made clear public statements about the power of his position.⁴ It is probable, then, that he also chose to convey such messages through his patronage of the luxury arts.

A quantity of extant objects can be associated with the 'Āmirids, which include some of the largest and most spectacular objects to survive from Islamic Iberia (the Pamplona casket, for example; see Colour Plate 11). A comprehensive study of 'Āmirid art has been delayed by the lack of a cultural framework within which to contextualize this art and evaluate its importance; for example, the courtly environment in which this art was conceived and manufactured had received almost no scholarly attention until recently.⁵ Nevertheless, there is ample evidence that al-Manṣūr patronised a flourishing court, regulated by an elaborate ceremonial imitated from the caliphs; that he received regular embassies from the rulers of his Christian and Berber allies—even from as far afield as Byzantium—during which no expense was spared to overawe the visitors with Córdoba's splendour; and that he actively engaged in literary salons (*majālis*) with his courtiers, so that literature flourished at the end of the tenth century, preparing the way for the famous blossoming in the eleventh.⁶

Furthermore, the poetry which survives from this period—especially the panegyric composed to be recited to the 'Āmirids on such ceremonial occasions—provides an important and unexplored means of elucidating the iconography of their art. I will focus here on an important group of carved marble objects made under 'Āmirid patronage, as a case-study for how poetic imagery can elucidate the meanings of artistic iconography.

⁴ For a full discussion of 'Āmirid architectural patronage, see Rosser-Owen, *Articulating the Hijāba*, chapter 3.

⁵ Now see Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, especially chapter 2.

⁶ For a full discussion of the workings of the 'Āmirid court, see Rosser-Owen, *Articulating the Hijāba*, chapter 2.

This group consists of approximately thirty extant objects and fragments of carved marble, which can be associated with the 'Āmirids through their stylistic similarity to the three monumental fountain basins which head the group.⁷ These are now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid (Colour Plate 9A, the 'Madrid basin');⁸ the Dār Si Sa'īd in Marrakesh (Colour Plate 9B and Fig. 2, the 'Marrakesh basin');⁹ and the Museo Nacional de Arte Hispanomusulmán in Granada (Colour Plate 10 and Fig. 1, the 'Granada basin').¹⁰ The inscriptions which fill the borders of every side of the basins tell us that they were made for 'Āmirid patrons, and indeed the Madrid basin is the only extant object to name al-Manṣūr in an inscription.¹¹ Dated 377 H./987–988, it was made in the ateliers of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, and is therefore also the only physical survival of the 'Āmirid palace-city. Each of these basins was hewn out of one block of marble, and measures between a metre and a metre and a half in length. Rich decoration on every face of the basins implies that they were intended to be seen from all four sides, and were surely originally located in the centre of a courtyard where they served as a water reservoir or fountain.¹² They each bear the remains

⁷ This marble group is discussed in detail in Rosser-Owen, *Articulating the Hijāba*, chapter 4, and the Appendix, cat. nos. 1 to 30.

⁸ Inv. no. 50428. Dimensions: 1.05 m (L) × 77 cm (W) × 68 cm (H); estimated volume 0.32 m³ (based on the published dimensions of the Marrakesh basin, extrapolating the thickness of the walls as 10 cm and the base as 20 cm); total volume of water 230 litres; estimated weight 800 kg (on the basis that marble weighs 2500 kg per m³. My thanks to Charlotte Hubbard of the Victoria and Albert Museum's Sculpture Conservation section for supplying this formula). The main study of this basin is Natascha Kubisch, "Ein Marmorbecken aus Madīnat al-Zāhira im Archäologischen Nationalmuseum in Madrid", *Madrider Mitteilungen* 35 (1994), pp. 398–417.

⁹ No inventory number. Made for 'Abd al-Malik ibn al-Manṣūr, and datable between 1004 and 1007, this is by far the biggest of the basins, as his casket (the 'Pamplona casket') is the biggest of the ivories. Dimensions: 1.55 m (L) × 84 cm (W) × 71 cm (H); total volume: 0.48 m³; total volume of water 440 litres; estimated weight 1200 kg. The main study of this basin is Jean Gallotti, "Sur un cuve de marbre datant du Khalifat de Cordoue (991–1008 J.C.)", *Hespéris* 3 (1923), pp. 363–391.

¹⁰ Inv. no. 243. Dimensions: 1.41 m (L) × 88 cm (W) × 60.5 cm (H); estimated volume 0.42 m³ (based on the extrapolated thickness of the walls and base of the Marrakesh basin); total volume of water 330 litres; estimated weight 1050 kg. On this basin, see Purificación Marinetto Sánchez, "Pila", in *Arte Islámico en Granada: Propuesta para un Museo de la Alhambra* (Granada: Editorial Comares, 1995), pp. 277–280, cat. no. 73.

¹¹ See Évariste Lévi-Provençal, *Inscriptions Arabes d'Espagne* (Leiden, 1931), p. 194, #216 (Madrid basin); pp. 194–195, #217 (Marrakesh basin); pp. 195–196, #220 (Granada basin).

¹² Fig. 1 shows how the Granada basin was reused in similar fashion by the son of the Nasrid sultan Muḥammad III, who recarved the inscription to record his patronage in 1305. See Lévi-Provençal, *Inscriptions*, #220.



Fig. 1. The Granada basin, showing where it was preserved in the Alhambra complex, until the nineteenth century. After Owen Jones, *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra*, Vol. I, pl. XLVI, 1842. By permission of the National Art Library.

of holes for input and output pipes, and have plain areas on their short sides, which indicate where fountain heads were attached, perhaps in the form of animals (as we know was the fashion in Córdoba).¹³ In fact, a poem by al-Jazīrī, one of al-Manṣūr's courtier-poets, describes a fountain in the *ḥājib's* palace as follows:

¹³ See the famous anecdote, reported in Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne Musulmane*, vol. II, pp. 148–149 (with a translation of the source given at p. 149, n. 1), of the twelve fountain heads commissioned by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III al-Nāṣir to adorn his audience hall: they were made of gold incrustated with pearls and precious stones, and represented different animals, including a gazelle, crocodile, dragon and elephant, and birds including an eagle, falcon and peacock.

In the centre of the hall is a large basin of green water in which the turtles continually make sounds.

The water pours from the jaws of a lion whose mouth could only be more terrible if it spoke.

It is of scented aloeswood and around its neck one sees a handsome necklace of pearls...

In this hall, a king, whose riches are without number, has gathered all happiness for his people.¹⁴

The size of the 'Āmirid marbles provides a huge decorative surface, and interestingly the decoration on the basins is highly consistent. The motif of the 'heraldic' eagle is a standard element of their decoration (Colour Plates 9 and 10), as is that of the lion attacking a gazelle. This motif—which is central to the interpretation of these objects—is now mostly missing from the Madrid and Marrakesh basins (Fig. 2),¹⁵ but surviving fragments and the shapes which remain on the surface allow us to reconstruct their original design on the basis of comparison with the Granada basin (Colour Plate 10). It is possible that the figural scenes on the Madrid and Marrakesh basins suffered from iconoclasm when they were reused during the Almohad period, while the 'inoffensive' floral scenes were untouched.¹⁶

Taking the front as the side on which the inscription begins, the only element which varies between the basins is the decoration on what was originally the back. Though this decoration is better-preserved than that of the other sides, their subject matter has never been included in previous considerations of the meaning of these basins. Earlier scholars have read the scenes of combat between lion and gazelle, between eagles and small animals, in terms of the eternal conflict between good and evil.¹⁷

¹⁴ J. M. Continente, "Abū Marwān al-Īyazīrī, poeta 'Āmirī", *Al-Andalus* 34/1 (1969), pp. 131–132.

¹⁵ See Leopoldo Torres Balbás, "Arte Hispanomusulmán hasta la caída del Califato de Córdoba", in *Historia de España, V: España Musulmana (711–1031): Instituciones, Sociedad, Cultura* (Madrid, 1957; new edition: Espasa Calpe, 1996), fig. 560, p. 720, for an image of the fragmentary lion-and-gazelle group on the original front of the Madrid basin.

¹⁶ The Marrakesh basin was discovered in 1923, serving as the trough of a fountain and half-built into a wall of the ablutions hall of the Madrasah Ibn Yūsuf, in Marrakesh. Only the floral side was visible, and on excavation the eagles on the proper left side and the decoration of the original front of the basin were found to have been mutilated: see Gallotti, "Sur un cuve de marbre", pp. 363–365. The interesting issues raised by the dispersal and reuse of Andalusī objects and architectural fragments are the subject of my current research in progress, and article in preparation, "Andalusī Spolia in Medieval Morocco: Architectural Politics, Political Architecture".

¹⁷ For example, Rafael Cómez Ramos, "Un tema iconográfico oriental antiguo en el arte hispano-musulmán del siglo XI", *Homenaje al Prof. Dr. Hernández Díaz*

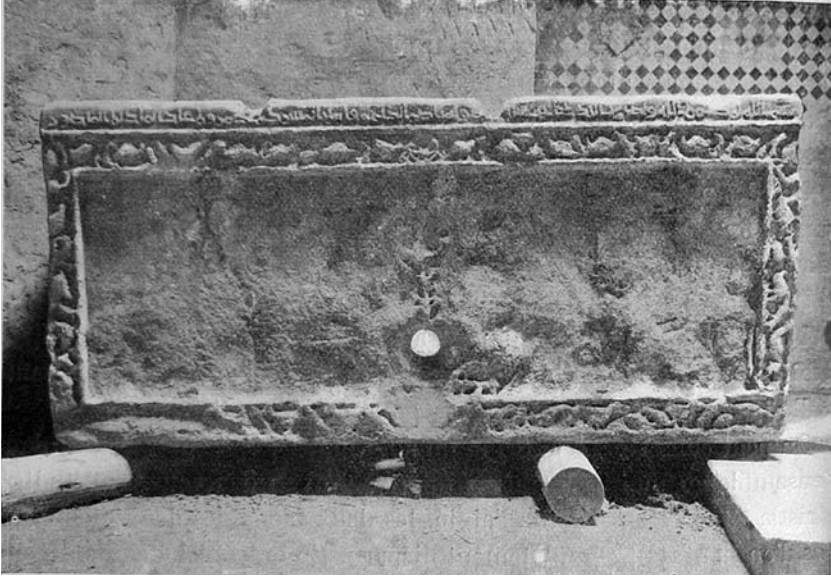


Fig. 2. View of the original front of the Marrakesh basin. The background shows the ablutions courtyard in the Madrasah Ibn Yūsuf, where it was found. After Gallotti, “Sur un cuve de marbre”, Fig. 1.

Such interpretations should, however, be taken with a pinch of salt for the way in which they project an ancient and external cosmology onto objects produced in a completely different context. Furthermore, they do not present a holistic treatment of the iconography—that is, one that considers the non-figural decoration as having an equally important role as the figural elements. In fact, one of the most interesting—and I would argue significant—aspects of these objects’ decoration is the coexistence of contrasting scenes of peaceful (floral) imagery with highly violent scenes of animal combat (a concept paralleled on the front and back of the Pamplona casket). This is surely the result of deliberate iconographic choice, and one which was intended to convey meaning.

Furthermore, the figural motifs seen on the ‘Āmirid basins are anomalous within the taxonomies of animal combat scenes in medieval al-Andalus. Though both the lion and eagle are used as royal symbols, the form of both here is unusual. The ‘heraldic’ eagle rarely occurs

(Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, Facultad de Geografía e Historia, 1982), vol. I, pp. 125–136.

in Andalusī art *before* this period, the only extant exception being the small pyxis made for al-Ḥakam II, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.¹⁸ Similarly, the lion-gazelle motif—which becomes standard during the ‘Āmirid period and continues into the *lā’ifa* period—*does not* occur on extant caliphal objects from al-Andalus, despite the famous Umayyad use of this motif in the mosaic pavement at Khirbat al-Mafjar.¹⁹ Instead, the motif of the lion and bull is used (as, for example, on the al-Mughīra pyxis),²⁰ inherited directly from the Near East, where it continued to be employed by the Būyids. However, significantly, where the lion-bull motif represents a combat between two equally strong animals, the ‘Āmirid objects feature the very different image of the unequal struggle between stronger and weaker animals. I will return in a moment to the relationship of this image to the iconography of contemporary poetry.

Though these marbles are often referred to as ‘ablution basins’, their figural decoration precludes a religious function. Rather, they would have been displayed in a private secular setting, probably in the gardens of one of the ‘Āmirid palaces, where we know that al-Manṣūr liked to relax with his *ḏuwān* of poets on his return from campaign.²¹ As mentioned, such fountains are described in the literature of the period; indeed, the eleventh-century Toledan courtier, Ibn Jabir, describes basins

¹⁸ Inv. no. 217–1865. The eagle motif on these basins was probably meant to convey an association with the Andalusī Umayyad caliphs, especially ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, who is said to have introduced the ‘heraldic’ eagle onto the banners carried by his army. Ibn Ḥayyān describes the preparations for the campaigning season of 322 H./933–4, and says, “on this occasion the eagle appeared among the banners, which [al-Nāṣir] had invented, since no ruler before him had had it, and the people gazed at it with curiosity and delight... [Afterwards] the poets greatly praised the recent and ingenious adoption of eagles onto the banners...”: Ibn Ḥayyān, *Crónica del Califa Abdarraḥman III al-Nāṣir entre los años 912 y 942 (Al-Muqtabis V)*, translated by María Jesús Viguera and Federico Corriente (Zaragoza: Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura, 1981), pp. 250–251 (§§224–225). The ‘Āmirid use of this motif, then, associates them with the Umayyad rulers, as well as asserting their leadership over the Andalusī army.

¹⁹ On which see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “The Lion-Gazelle Mosaic at Khirbat al-Mafjar”, *Muqarnas* 14 (1997), pp. 11–18.

²⁰ See *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, exhibition catalogue, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1992), cat. no. 3.

²¹ As Glaire Anderson shows in her article in this volume, water basins and pools were a common feature of the suburban villas, or *munyas*, surrounding Umayyad Córdoba. This kind of gathering had its origins in Umayyad *munya* culture, as argued by Anderson in *The Suburban Villa (munya) and Court Culture in Umayyad Córdoba (756–976 C.E.)*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture, Department of Architecture), 2005, Chapter 6, “Leisure, Feasting and Refinement”.

which sound very like these 'Āmirid marbles in his account of the festivities hosted by the *ṭā'ifa* ruler al-Ma'mūn (1043–1075) in honour of the circumcision of his heir:

... In this room there were ponds at whose corners were placed figures of lions forged in gold with great art... [and] in the [middle] of each pond was a basin of marble in the form of an altar, of great size, of wondrous form and extraordinarily engraved, for on each of their sides they were worked with figures of animals, birds and trees.²²

The context of private display in which the Toledan fountains are mentioned is exactly the kind of environment which I imagine for the 'Āmirid basins. The *ḥājibs* relaxed in private with select members of the Córdoba elite, a policy which encouraged their tacit legitimization of the 'Āmirids' position as *de facto* rulers of al-Andalus.²³ Al-Manṣūr cultivated his courtiers by forging personal bonds of loyalty, through inviting them to intimate soirées at which poetry was composed and sung. Whereas the caliph had kept aloof from mingling freely with his court poets, in order to maintain the dignity and pomp which his presence conferred upon state ceremonies, al-Manṣūr arose from among the very echelons of educated nobility which formed the court *kuttāb*, or *literatī*;²⁴ he had mixed in these circles as his career developed, and it is therefore not surprising that his tastes in literature and the way in which he chose to relax in private should reflect the social environment to which he was accustomed. This group, well-versed in poetic language and imagery, was surely the target audience of the messages embodied in the carved decoration of the marble basins and, consequently, it is likely that an exploration of the imagery of this poetry elucidates the iconographic meaning of these basins.

Of all the poets of the 'Āmirid *dīwān*, the works of Ibn Darrāj al-Qaṣṭallī (958–1030), survive in the greatest number. Ibn Darrāj joined al-Manṣūr's court in the early 990s, and remained a favoured courtier-poet until the outbreak of *fitna*, after which he left Córdoba seeking patronage elsewhere. His poems are thus exactly contemporary with

²² The full passage is quoted, in her translation, by Cynthia Robinson, *Palace Architecture and Ornament in the 'Courtly' Discourse of the Mulūk al-Tawā'if: Metaphor and Utopia*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1995, pp. 454–459.

²³ Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, chapter 2; Rosser-Owen, *Articulating the Hijāba*, chapter 2.

²⁴ See James T. Monroe, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry: A Student Anthology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 10.

the surviving ʿĀmirid objects, which date from the late 980s through to the first decade of the eleventh century. In the panegyric poems composed by Ibn Darrāj for the ʿĀmirids, the lion is one of the most repetitive images, and it has a clear and consistent equivalence to their role as *muǧāhidūn*, the lions of the battlefield—it is important to remember here that al-Manṣūr was reputedly never defeated in the more than fifty campaigns he led against the Christian kingdoms of the northern Peninsula.

It should be stressed that the imagery we are discussing—in both the poetry composed by Ibn Darrāj and the works of art made for the ʿĀmirids by the craftsmen of their ateliers—was not new, nor was it unique to al-Andalus or to this period. The use of animals such as the lion and eagle to symbolise power and royalty belongs to the *koiné* of images employed in courtly art as long as there have been kings to commission it. In the medieval Islamic world, patrons of luxury objects selected images from a recognised repertoire, according to the messages they wished to communicate about themselves. In order to understand the message which the use of an image on a certain object was intended to convey, it is necessary to examine the particular manner in which an image was employed in its *local* context. This local cultural milieu finds expression in the literary as much as the plastic arts, and creates a mutuality of meaning which the cultural historian can draw upon to understand both the art and poetry of a particular period.

In this way it is significant to note the *intensification* of certain images in panegyrics composed for the ʿĀmirids. For example, there are surprisingly few surviving instances in caliphal poetry of the lion as an explicit symbol of the caliph himself, which is how it is employed under the ʿĀmirids; and when this metaphor is used, there is a suggestion of distance between the caliph and the lion. For example, the following verses come from a poem composed in celebration of the defeat of the Berber rebel, Ḥasan ibn Kānūn, which was the major military victory of al-Ḥakam's II career. The poet writes:

Your lions killed their lions; your strong lion-cubs [killed their] strong lion-cubs.²⁵

²⁵ *Anales Palatinos del Califa de Córdoba al-Hakam II, por ʿĪsā ibn Aḥmad al-Rāzī (360–364 A.H. = 971–975 J.C.)*. Excerpted from the *Muqtabis* (Ibn Ḥayyān) and translated by Emilio García Gómez (Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1967), p. 198, §180 (l. 18).

These lines are significant for the way in which the lion here *does not* represent al-Ḥakam himself, but rather his victorious general, Ghālib (d. 981). In contrast, on the occasion of a campaign against García-Fernández of Castile, Ibn Darrāj addresses the enemy,

Where will you be able to save yourself when the lion of the lairs, the protector al-Manṣūr, has come to you enraged?²⁶

And on al-Manṣūr's return from a campaign against León in 995, the poet praises him,

You are like a lion which risks its life in battle.²⁷

Though a number of panegyrics in honour of military victories are sung to al-Ḥakam during the course of al-Rāzī's *Annals*, lion images are conspicuous by their absence. A study of the twenty-six panegyrics recorded in the *Annals*, many of which are very long, reveals only four instances of lion imagery, whereas the thirty-three surviving 'Āmirid panegyrics by Ibn Darrāj yield twenty-nine instances. Of course this kind of comparison is not an exact science, dictated as it is by problems of survival, but it is clear that in the contemporary poetic imagery, the lion was a favoured metaphor for al-Manṣūr and his sons.

As with the 'heraldic' eagle motif, it is likely that the 'Āmirids' use of the lion conveyed an association with the greatest of the Andalusī Umayyad caliphs, 'Abd al-Raḥmān III al-Nāṣir, who kept live lions, received as gifts from his Maghrebi clients, housed in a specially-constructed enclosure behind his palace at Córdoba.²⁸ He also made a visually-striking statement of his own power by constructing a massive lion fountain at his private estate, Munyat al-Nā'ūra.²⁹ One of al-Nāṣir's court poets honoured him in verse as "the lion of the caliphate",³⁰ and the construction of this prominent fountain seems to visualize this quasi-title. There are many respects in which al-Manṣūr seems to have imitated a model of legitimation which was established by al-Nāṣir in

²⁶ *Dīwān Ibn Darrāj al-Qaṣṭallī*. Edition with introduction, notes, appendices and indices by Maḥmūd 'Alī Makkī, 2nd edition (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1969), #106, l. 20.

²⁷ *Dīwān Ibn Darrāj*, #111, l. 17.

²⁸ Ibn Ḥayyān, *Crónica del Califa Abdarraḥman*, pp. 40–42 (§§23–25).

²⁹ This is discussed, and the passage quoted in full, in Glair Anderson's article in this volume.

³⁰ Ibn Ḥayyān, *Crónica del Califa Abdarraḥman*, p. 46 (§28), second poem on this page, ll. 3–5.

the articulation of his new caliphate,³¹ and perhaps the ‘Āmirids chose to use the lion motif precisely because it resonated of that caliph’s authority. However, by introducing the gazelle, the image subtly differed from the caliphal motif, and became an identifiably ‘Āmirid symbol.

We can also seek the meaning of this pairing of lion with gazelle in the poetic testimony: in a poem composed by Ibn Darrāj on the occasion of al-Manṣūr’s campaign against a coalition of all the Spanish Christian kingdoms, *circa* 1000, the ‘Āmirid troops are represented as lions and the conquered enemy as

herds of wild gazelles who have turned their cheeks away from the battle,
showing eyes in which can be seen their confusion and hunger.³²

However, the most explicit ‘image’ is provided by a living metaphor: during al-Manṣūr’s campaign against García-Fernández, Count of Castile, in 995, his courtier Ṣā’id al-Baghdādī captured a gazelle and symbolically named it Gharsiyya after the Count. He brought the animal, still alive, to al-Manṣūr, along with “an elegant *qaṣīda*” in which he expressed the wish that the same might happen to its namesake:

O refuge of the terrified, asylum of the persecuted, comfort to the
vilified!
O string of virtues and repository of every brilliant quality! You are the
refuge of the needy.
A slave [of yours] whom you took by the hand and raised from his station,
presents you with a deer.
I named it Gharsiyya and I sent it to you [with a rope around its neck],
that the same may happen to its namesake.
Should you accept [my present], I would consider it the greatest favour
that a generous man can bestow.³³

According to al-Maqqarī, the living metaphor was completed when, that very day, García-Fernández was captured by al-Manṣūr. Thus, the metaphorical ‘Āmirid lion made of his enemies real gazelles.

³¹ One of them being his choice of *laqab*, in a root (*n-s-r*) which evokes those of both al-Nāṣir, and al-Ḥakam ‘al-Mustaṣir’. On titles in this root, see also Maribel Fierro, “The Anṣārīs, Nāṣir al-Dīn, and the Naṣrids in al-Andalus”, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 31 (2006), pp. 232–247.

³² *Dīwān Ibn Darrāj*, #105, ll. 19–20.

³³ Al-Maqqarī, *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain extracted from the Naḥḥ-t-tūb*, translated by Pascual de Gayangos (London: printed for the Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland, 1840–43), vol. II, p. 206 (Arabic text given in pp. 484–485, n. 17).

Poetic imagery can also elucidate the meaning of the basins' purely naturalistic decoration: if we are to read the lion-gazelle combat scenes as embodying the 'Āmirids' role as *mujāhidūn*, do the representations of what seems to be a verdant garden evoke another poetic topos—that of the bounty of the natural landscape as generated by the ruler's blessed beneficence? This is clearly expressed in Ibn Darrāj's line, "the Universe is flourishing under your reign".³⁴ This poetic metaphor had also been translated into art under the caliphs: the lush floral decoration which lines the walls of the throne hall at Madīnat al-Zahrā' surely evokes the sentiment that the blossoming of the natural world is a direct result of the ruler's generosity.³⁵ The completely contrasting aesthetic of the basins' long sides would therefore encapsulate what Julie Meisami has termed the "generosity-ruthlessness doublet",³⁶ those kingly virtues which are commonly the subject of panegyric.

A poem whose composition is attributed to al-Manṣūr himself uses two metaphors to describe his own nobility and bravery. The poem is undated, but it is tempting to relate its metaphor of construction to his architectural projects of the 980s. It should not be surprising that al-Manṣūr himself engaged in poetic composition and recitation: it is related that, in one of his *majālis*, the *ḥāḍib* recited verses from a *qaṣīda* by Abū Nūwās (c. 747–c. 813), the archetypal poet of the wine-party genre,³⁷ and he is known to have corresponded in verse with his courtiers.³⁸ His poem runs:

In person, as a magnanimous nobleman should, I have faced the gravest perils, and had nothing with me but a brave heart, an excellent lance, and a sharp and polished sword. Launching into combat troops of warriors, veritable lions which clash with other lions in their lairs, in person I have led leaders of all kinds and done battle until I found myself triumphant. It is not a new edifice which I have constructed, but I have

³⁴ *Dīwān Ibn Darrāj*, #111, l. 2.

³⁵ For a discussion of how the decoration of this hall could be interpreted, see Manuel Ación Almansa, "Materiales e hipótesis para una interpretación del Salón de 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Nāṣir", in *Madīnat al-Zahrā': El Salón de 'Abd al-Rahmān III*, edited by Antonio Vallejo Triano (Córdoba: Imprenta San Pablo, 1995), pp. 177–195.

³⁶ This term was used in a paper entitled "Gazelles and Lions: Political Symbols or Sex Symbols? The apse mosaic at Khirbat al-Mafjar revisited", presented by Professor Julie Meisami at the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, on 17 May 2002.

³⁷ Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, p. 118.

³⁸ On the poetic correspondence between al-Manṣūr and Abū Marwān ibn Shuhayd, see James Dickie, "Ibn Shuhayd: A Biographical and Critical Study", *Al-Andalus* 29 (1964), pp. 248–249.

enlarged that which ‘Abd al-Malik and ‘Āmir built. We [the ‘Āmirids] have by means of our exploits rejuvenated a nobility which we possess from long ago Ma‘āfir.³⁹

It seems that, in these verses, al-Manṣūr is concerned with legitimising his position as *hājib*, emphasizing the noble status he inherited from his ancestors in order to justify his elevated position. Here, the image of the warrior as lion is twinned with a metaphor of architectural construction, which recalls the pairing on his basin of lion-gazelle combat with the decoration on the back of three lobed arches (Colour Plate 9A). The ‘realism’ with which these architectonic elements are represented on the basin in turn evokes the blind arcades of the gates which al-Manṣūr added to the eastern façade of the Great Mosque of Córdoba. It is surely no coincidence that al-Manṣūr’s building work at the Mosque began in the same year as his basin was produced (987–988). It seems highly probable, therefore, that the basin was a special commission by al-Manṣūr to commemorate his extension to the Mosque, an act which was so symbolic to him that he preserved it in poetry as well as art.

The nature imagery which flourishes on the Madrid basin thus encapsulates al-Manṣūr’s sovereign generosity at patronising such an important and pious foundation for his people. It also evokes what Oleg Grabar has called the “effect” of the mihrab within the Mosque itself:⁴⁰ its chamber-like form makes it appear as “a gate, open towards the invisible or the unknown”—open, in fact, towards Paradise, the ruler’s reward for beneficence, and represented in poetry and the Qur’ān as the ultimate garden. In both his poem and in the decoration of his basin, al-Manṣūr perceives his architectural patronage as an essential element of his virtues as *de facto* ruler, indeed as a complement to his role as *mujāhid*.

How, then, should we read the entirely floral decoration on the back of the Marrakesh basin, made for his son ‘Abd al-Malik (Colour Plate 9B)? Again, ‘Āmirid literature can enlighten us: ‘Abd al-Malik himself

³⁹ Ibn ‘Idhārī al-Marrākushī, *Al-Bayān al-Mughrib fi ikhtisār mulūk al-Andalus wa’l-Maghrib. Histoire de l’Afrique et de l’Espagne intitulée al-Bayano ‘l-Mogrib par Ibn Adhari (de Maroc) et fragments de la chronique de ‘Arīb*, edited by Reinhart Dozy (Leiden, 1848–1851), vol. II, p. 293; translated by Edmond Fagnan, *Histoire de l’Afrique et de l’Espagne, intitulée Al-Bayano ‘l-Mogrib* (Algiers, 1904), vol. II, p. 455.

⁴⁰ Oleg Grabar, “Notes sur le mihrab de la Grande Mosquée de Cordoue”, in *Le Mihrab dans l’Architecture et la Religion Musulmanes: Actes du Colloque international: Formes symboliques et formes esthétiques dans l’architecture religieuse musulmane: le mihrab, Paris 1980*, edited by Alexandre Papadopoulos (Leiden: Brill, 1988), pp. 115–116.

particularly favoured the new genre of floral panegyric (*nawriyyāt*) which developed during the 'Āmirid period.⁴¹ These poems consisted of a few verses in description of a particular flower and ended with a verse of praise to the addressee.⁴² Sometimes they introduced a longer, panegyric poem.⁴³ Poets presented them as gifts to their patron, like a bouquet of flowers.⁴⁴ This genre of floral poetry embodied the late tenth-century preference for "nature in a controlled state": whereas ordinary speech in Arabic is *nathr*, 'scattered words', poetry is *naẓm*, 'arranged words',⁴⁵ and the words (metaphorically, flowers) of the floral poem are arranged to symbolize a carefully-cultivated garden. It seems possible, then, that we can read in the structure—horizontal, like the verses of a poem—of the four bands of flowers on 'Abd al-Malik's basin the 'petrification' of a *nawriyyah*, of verses composed in his favourite poetic genre. Such a basin could have been commissioned by him to adorn a garden in the private reaches of his palace, where in all likelihood he would have gathered with his boon companions and listened to such floral images being conjured in their poetry.

In sum, the 'Āmirids used these marble basins as the vehicles to project their 'public image' as fulfilling the virtues of the ideal ruler. The messages on these objects would have been displayed in private contexts within the 'Āmirid palace gardens, where the regents relaxed in poetic soirées with the members of the Córdoba elite who comprised their court. These intimate gatherings enabled the 'Āmirids to build personal relationships with those noble families whose support they required to legitimise their *de facto* rule. In addition, this audience was well versed in the imagery of contemporary poetry, especially that sung in praise of

⁴¹ 'Abd al-Malik's penchant for this genre is recorded by Ibn 'Idhārī, *Al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, vol. III: *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane au XI^e siècle*, edited by Lévi-Provençal (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1930), pp. 18–21, translated by Felipe Maíllo Salgado, *La Caída del Califato de Córdoba y los Reyes de Taifas* (Salamanca: Estudios Árabes e Islámicos, Universidad de Salamanca, 1993), pp. 25–28.

⁴² María Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin and Michael Sells, eds., *The Literature of al-Andalus*, Cambridge History of Arabic Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 214.

⁴³ Monroe, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry*, p. 10.

⁴⁴ The eleventh-century *adab* poet, al-Himyarī, mentions one occasion on which a poet accompanies floral-themed praises with an actual bouquet: *Kitāb al-Badrī fī Wasf al-Rabī'* (al-Maghrib: Dār al-Afaq al-Jadidah, 1989), p. 132, cited by Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, p. 118.

⁴⁵ Raymond P. Scheindlin, *Wine, Women and Death: Medieval Hebrew Poems on the Good Life* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1986), pp. 8–9.

the ʿĀmirids by their poets laureate. They would also have understood the mutuality of the literary and artistic imagery, all the better to understand that the marble basins encapsulated—or ‘petrified’—the poetic language of the rulers’ virtues, as praised in panegyric in terms of the “generosity-ruthlessness doublet”. Or, in the words of Henry Myers,

Who is the king? On a conscious level for medieval men, the king is the man ordained to keep peace and render justice, to further the earthly happiness of his subjects. He is also the man ordained to defend and strengthen the faith, to help his subjects gain eternal bliss.⁴⁶

The lion-gazelle motif emblematised the ʿĀmirids’ physical courage, which they used for the defence of Islam (“to keep peace and render justice... [and] to defend and strengthen the faith”); and the artistic allusions to their architectural and literary patronage, and the prominence of imagery of flowers and nature, evoked the full gamut of princely virtues, as well as specifically their efforts “to further the earthly happiness of [their] subjects... [and] to help [them] gain eternal bliss”, through their pious foundations. In the ʿĀmirids’ self-perception, they had just claim to use these images, since they possessed in abundance the appropriate kingly virtues; their employment of such symbols was an important means by which the ʿĀmirids could demonstrate that they were the right men for the job, and thereby enhance the legitimacy of their rule. The apparently contrasting peaceful and violent images on these objects thus represent two sides of the same coin, and tell us much about the ways in which the ʿĀmirids sought to portray themselves as ideal rulers. At the same time, the interrelationship between the plastic and literary arts provides clues to the processes of ʿĀmirid cultural patronage, and the complex messages visualized on their marble basins makes them true “poems in stone”.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Henry A. Myers, “The concept of kingship in the ‘Book of Emperors’ (‘Kaiserchronik’)”, *Traditio* 27 (1971), p. 205.

⁴⁷ Cómez Ramos, “Un tema iconográfico”, p. 134.

LOVE IN THE TIME OF *FTNA*:
'COURTLINESS' AND THE 'PAMPLONA' CASKET

Cynthia Robinson

The creation and propagandistic diffusion of state and ruler identity became vital during the years of *ftna* which followed the collapse of the Umayyad state after the end of the 'Āmirid regime. It was perhaps even more significant than it had been during the years of the caliphate proper, when the state's legitimacy was not seriously or consistently contested. Elsewhere, I have argued that this new ruler persona first emerged at the courts of the Banū 'Āmir, especially in the spheres of literature and court practice,¹ and it would be logical that it also influenced the creation of visual culture. Two ivory objects created during the reign of al-Manṣūr ibn Abī 'Āmir's oldest son and successor, 'Abd al-Malik Sayf al-Dawla al-Muẓaffār (henceforth referred to as Sayf al-Dawla), give us valuable insight into the visual facet of an 'Āmirī programme of legitimization, and of the newly 'courtly' sovereign's place in it.

During the third quarter of the tenth century, Berber clients from Ifrīqiyya sent gifts of unworked ivory to the Córdoba court, from which the group of ivory containers commonly referred to as the 'Córdoba ivories' was manufactured.² The cylindrical container known today as the 'Braga' pyxis, after the cathedral in Portugal in whose collection it

¹ See Cynthia Robinson, *In Praise of Song: the Making of Courtly Culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1005–1134 A.D.* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

² The Córdoba ivories have attracted a great deal of scholarly attention since the publication of *Al-Andalus* in 1992, and several articles bring to bear close readings and detailed interpretations of the objects against their (complex, often varied) cultural backdrops: see, for example, Francisco Prado-Vilar, "Circular Visions of Fertility and Punishment: Caliphal Ivory Caskets from al-Andalus", *Muqarnas* 14 (1997), pp. 19–41; Mariam Rosser-Owen, "A Córdoba Ivory Pyxis Lid in the Ashmolean Museum", *Muqarnas* 16 (1999), pp. 16–31; and now the double volume of essays dedicated to the subject in the *Journal of the David Collection* 2 (2005). Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, Chapter 5, and "Courtly Courts as Sites of Cultural Interaction: Reconsiderations of the 'Troubadour' Question", in *Culture Politique des Plantagenêt (1154–1224)*, ed. Martin Aurell (Poitiers: Centre d'Études Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale, 2003), pp. 89–122, includes a new interpretation of the 'Pamplona' casket in a Christian context, and considers the issue of objects of Muslim manufacture in Christian hands and collections.

has been preserved, and the larger and much more spectacular container generally referred to as the ‘Leire’ or ‘Pamplona’ casket (Colour Plate 11), were both produced for Sayf al-Dawla.³ Scholars associate the ivory caskets with the production of luxury goods for the court circles most intimately associated with the royal family. Those who commissioned or received the earliest of these objects were very close (sometimes, dangerously so) to the locus of caliphal power. Notable among these are the ill-fated prince al-Mughīra, younger brother to al-Ḥakam II, whose plans to co-opt the caliphal throne in place of the minor Hishām were neatly foiled by al-Manṣūr. The famous ‘al-Mughīra’ pyxis bears a striking programme of figural imagery that has particularly invited attempts at iconographical interpretations: Holod saw its imagery as specifically constructed in order to address the prince’s ambitions, reading it as a gift, perhaps a mockery; Prado-Vilar argued that it was intended as a specifically coded threat, one whose menaces were later made reality as al-Manṣūr set the stage for his own *prise de pouvoir*.⁴ A logical conclusion might be that al-Manṣūr, or someone close to him, was the commissioner of the object. The figural programme which adorns the pyxis of Zīyād ibn Aflaḥ, chief of police in Córdoba during al-Nāṣir’s reign, is also related to an assertion of political privilege by someone whose rights to it were not firmly established: this same gentleman was, like al-Mughīra, involved some years later in an abortive attempt to remove Hishām from office and replace him with a stronger representative of the Umayyad dynasty.⁵ In this case, the object’s patron claims those privileges for himself, rather than addressing or contesting the claims of someone else.

All objects singled out in recent studies exhibit programmes of imagery which depend heavily on figural representations for their construction of meaning. These objects make use of figure types, postures and combinations that might, in other cases, be intended to bear no particular meaning at all. In these cases, however—once political circumstances have been taken into consideration—the motifs achieve

³ On these objects, see *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, exhibition catalogue, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1992), cat. no. 4, pp. 198–201; cat. no. 5, p. 202; both entries with earlier bibliography.

⁴ For Holod’s reading, see *Al-Andalus*, cat. no. 4, p. 198; for Prado-Vilar’s, see “Circular Visions” and, more recently, “Enclosed in Ivory: The Miseducation of al-Mughīra”, *Journal of the David Collection* 2,1 (2005), pp. 139–163.

⁵ Rosser-Owen, “A Córdoba Ivory Pyxis Lid”, p. 20; she terms the visual programme of Zīyād ibn Aflaḥ’s pyxis “practically propaganda”.

specific and directed significance. This consideration is crucial for the interpretation I shall propose for the ‘Pamplona’ casket.

Given the prestigious and exclusive aura which surrounded the production of carved ivory containers for the caliphal court, confirmed by their dedication only to members of the royal family, it is hardly surprising that members of the Banū ‘Āmir should have left their mark as patrons in this rarefied arena. Both Holod and Rosser-Owen note that almost thirty years separate the production of the first group of ivories (during the caliphal years proper) and the second (unmistakably associated with ‘Āmirī court activities); Rosser-Owen remarks that al-Manṣūr, perhaps in the commissioning of the ‘Ashmolean pyxis’ for his second son ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, may have revived a luxury-arts industry which had ceased to function.⁶

The ‘Āmirī objects, then, represent a specifically charged revival of a patronage practice and a medium guaranteed to be associated in the minds of an informed viewing public with the powers and privileges of the *imāma*. That public, or those who would fully understand the gestures and claims being made in ivory, was probably a fairly small one: the objects which would exist as points of reference (the pyxides and other containers produced for caliphal patrons and recipients) were quite small and thus suited only for the most intimate of viewing contexts; one thinks of the small groups of courtiers such as Ibn Shuhayd and the Banū Burd, at whose centre al-Manṣūr and his sons liked to find themselves during their *majālis al-uns*.⁷

Three of the ‘Córdoban ivories’ have an undisputed connection to the Banū ‘Āmir (the ‘Ashmolean’ lid, the ‘Pamplona’ casket and the ‘Braga’ pyxis), but, given the tendency of scholarship to uncritically associate the Banū ‘Āmir (just as these latter might have wished) with the Umayyad house and regime, little attention has been devoted to any of these objects as a visual statement of the *ḥājib*’s, rather than the caliph’s, aesthetics, cultural agenda and, of course, power.⁸ The ‘Pamplona’ casket, in fact, makes a powerful statement concerning the ruler persona Sayf al-Dawla envisioned for himself and—certainly within

⁶ Rosser-Owen, “A Córdoba Ivory Pyxis Lid,” p. 27 and n. 43.

⁷ For further details, see Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, Part One, Chapters 2 and 3.

⁸ Though now see Mariam Rosser-Owen, *Articulating the Ḥijāba: ‘Āmirid Artistic and Cultural Patronage in al-Andalus, circa 970–1010*. Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, 2004; and also Rosser-Owen’s contribution in this volume.

the group of the ‘Córdoban ivories’—is a unique and unprecedented object. Size is a good place to begin: the ‘Pamplona’ casket measures 23.6 (H) × 38.4 (W) × 23.7 (depth) cm, whereas the pyxides range in diameter from 10 to 15 cm.⁹ Other caskets manufactured during the caliphal and *fitna* years are significantly smaller—the largest dimension (length) of the box made for al-Nāṣir’s daughter is only 9.5 cm.¹⁰ In addition to its size, the ‘Pamplona’ casket is distinguished among the ivories by its format, its shape (the truncated-pyramidal roof differentiates it from other flat-lidded caskets in the early group), and, as shall be discussed, its programme of imagery: it is indeed something of a strange animal among the ivories.

The model for Sayf al-Dawla’s casket, in fact, is not to be found among the Córdoban ivories, with which traditional scholarly taxonomy encourages us to group it on the grounds of common medium, but in the wood and silver-gilt casket made for Hishām II in 976.¹¹ The rectangular format with truncated-pyramidal roof is exactly reproduced in Sayf al-Dawla’s casket, and its dimensions are almost identical to those of Hishām’s, which are 27 (H) × 38.5 (W) × 23.5 (depth) cm. It is probable that the casket was produced to commemorate the caliph al-Ḥakam al-Mustanṣir’s declaration of Hishām as his heir: the prince is mentioned in this capacity (*wālī aḥd al-muslimīn*) in the inscription that runs around the border of the object’s lid. Although no such declaration is made in the inscription on Sayf al-Dawla’s casket, I believe that the commissioning of such an object was as obvious a visual grab for (caliphal) power as al-Manṣūr’s son dared to make. Although we must certainly bear in mind the possibility that other objects modelled on Hishām’s casket existed and have not survived (metal, of course, was particularly vulnerable because it might be melted down and made into something else), the exactness with which Sayf al-Dawla’s casket

⁹ The distinction between pyxis and casket in the specific context of al-Muẓaffar’s patronage is, I believe, one of ‘public’ and ‘private’ court culture. The large size and figural programme of the casket were, as shall be seen, intended to generate a programme of politicized meaning. The diminutive size of the ‘Braga’ pyxis, on the other hand, argues for a very intimate viewing context, as does the rather non-specific nature of its ornamental programme, in contrast to the caliphal pyxides, the majority of which are figural and probably politically charged; the ‘Āmirī object’s programme of meaning is more oblique and subtle. See *Al-Andalus*, cat. no. 5, p. 202.

¹⁰ *Al-Andalus*, cat. no. 2, p. 192. Admittedly, this is one of the smallest of the extant ivories.

¹¹ *Al-Andalus*, cat. no. 9, pp. 208–209, with bibliography; the casket is housed today in the treasury of Gerona Cathedral.

repeats the dimensions and format of his sovereign's casket strongly suggests imitative (and appropriative) intent.

Further confirmation of this intent is found in the similarity of the dedicatory inscriptions on the two objects: both begin with the *basmala* and wishes for God's blessings (*baraka min allāh*). These formulaic expressions are followed, in both inscriptions, by a similar incantation of good wishes: on the caliph's casket, we read *wa yumn wa sa'āda wa surūr dā'im* ("prosperity, good fortune and lasting happiness"), while on the *ḥājib*'s appears *wa ghibṭa wa surūr wa bulūgh al-amal* ("delight and happiness and the attainment of hopes"). One of the few significant differences between the inscriptions, in fact, only further underlines emulative (and not entirely innocent) intent behind Sayf al-Dawla's casket. Hishām's was clearly made for him as a gift from his father, al-Ḥakam: the inscription reads *mimma amara bi-'amalihi li-*... ("what he ordered to be made for..."), while the designation on Sayf al-Dawla's casket, *mimma amara bi-'amalihi*..., appears without the preposition *li-*. This would imply that Sayf al-Dawla was both commissioner and recipient, rather than merely the recipient, of the object.¹² No name is given after *'amalihi* which would designate a recipient of Sayf al-Dawla's casket; instead it is followed by *'alā yaday al-fatā al-kabīr [Z]uhayr ibn Muḥammad al-Āmirī mamlūkīhi*... ("by, or at the hands of, the chief *fatā* [Z]uhayr ibn Muḥammad al-Āmirī, his slave"). Given the dense and varied figural programme of imagery which characterizes the Āmirī product, it is likely that Sayf al-Dawla's instructions to his *fatā al-kabīr* were much more specific than were al-Ḥakam's to Jawdhar, who is named as the commissioning agent on Hishām's casket.¹³

The Āmirī casket—due to its size, format and programme of imagery—was intended to impact viewers with its authority. Even greater authority is lent to the object by the presence of several artisans' signatures in hidden locations on the piece's surface.¹⁴ No signatures

¹² On the phrasing of inscriptions on the Córdoba ivories, see Sheila Blair, "What the Inscriptions tell us: Text and Message on the Ivories from al-Andalus", *Journal of the David Collection* 2,1 (2005), pp. 74–99, especially pp. 79–80 on the meaning of *amara* and *'amala*.

¹³ We know from al-Rāzī's Annals that Jawdhar held the post of "superintendent of the gold- and silver-smiths" (*ṣāhib al-ṣāgha*), and it was obviously in this capacity that he oversaw the execution of this casket: see *Anales Palatinos del Califa de Córdoba al-Ḥakam II, por 'Isā ibn Ahmad al-Rāzī* (360–364 A.H. = 971–975 J.C.). Excerpted from the *Muqtabis* (Ibn Ḥayyān) and translated by Emilio García Gómez (Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1967), p. 152, §127.

¹⁴ Discussed by Holod in *Al-Andalus*, cat. no. 4, p. 199.

are found on the nearly contemporary, much smaller and probably more ‘private’ pyxis which also belonged to Sayf al-Dawla, but there is a signature on Hishām’s casket, again hidden, on the interior of the lockplate.¹⁵ The *ḥājib*, then, in a manner consistent with the deliberately emulative and appropriative intent *vis-à-vis* Hishām’s casket, has taken a feature of that object—official signatures from workers in royal workshops—and made it, in the context of his own commission, into a statement (“I have enough ivory in my possession to make a casket as large as Hishām’s, but out of a more precious material; excellent craftsmen are at my beck and call”, etc.).¹⁶

Given the deliberate nature of the size, format and inscriptions of Sayf al-Dawla’s casket, we may assume that the programme of imagery with which it was adorned was an equally careful and calculated product. Moreover, it stands, probably deliberately, in sharp contrast to the overall pattern of silver-and-niello vines and leaves with which Hishām’s casket is adorned. Again, as in the case of the artisans’ signatures, a feature of the caliphal repertoire—figural ornament—has been selected, manipulated and given new meaning at ‘Āmirī hands. The caliphal objects which the ‘Pamplona’ casket’s figural programme would most likely have called to viewers’ minds are quite small, as are the figures which adorn them; they would have been legible only at very close range, perhaps only fully when held in the hands of an individual viewer. The placement of a (larger and therefore more easily legible) figural programme on an object whose format is clearly implicated in the issue of just who actually held the reins of caliphal power gives

¹⁵ See *Al-Andalus*, p. 208, for a detail. As in the case of Sayf al-Dawla’s casket, the names of those who signed the object as artisans (Badr and Tarīf) are different from the name which appears in the principal inscription as the overseer of the workshop.

¹⁶ One is reminded of the signatures found in the inscriptions on friezes and architectural elements in the *majlīs* at Madīnat al-Zahrā’: see María Antonia Martínez Núñez, “La epigrafía del Salón de ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III”, in *Madīnat al-Zahrā’: el salón de ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III*, ed. Antonio Vallejo Triano (Córdoba: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura, 1995), pp. 107–152. Martínez has argued convincingly for the identification of one of these named men as a major figure in al-Nāṣir’s entourage of advisors, one who was instrumental in helping the caliph to elaborate his programme of propaganda against heretics, or *ahl al-bida’*. This view is corroborated by Glaire Anderson’s investigations into the *fiṭyān* as patrons of extra-urban estates (*munyas*), and as some of the most important members of the court elites, providing a serious counterbalance to the power of the free Arab and Berber members at court: see Glaire D. Anderson, *The Suburban Villa (munya) and Court Culture in Umayyad Cordoba (756–976 C.E.)*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture, Department of Architecture), 2005, Chapter 5, “The Social Dimensions of *Munya* Patronage”, pp. 119–48.

heightened significance to those figures and, in turn, more specific significance to the object itself.

Sayf al-Dawla's casket, in fact, represents the first (and only surviving) coherent visual presentation of the 'Āmirī ruler in the persona of the 'courtly' sovereign, and of the implication of this persona in a programme of political legitimization. Through this representation, Sayf al-Dawla confirms aspects of his own constructed identity which differentiate it (and him) from the persona of the Umayyad caliph: the casket's visual programme alludes to the ties of obligation based on friendship and 'love' (rather than on privilege generated by heredity) on which the literary record indicates that al-Manṣūr, and his sons after him, sought to base their bids for power... with a little help, of course, from their 'friends' (*nudamā*). These visual statements are not made in the context of a precious pyxis which a viewer would have to hold and turn in his hands in order to receive the maximum impact of its message, but on the flat, horizontally disposed, and thus easily legible, front of a particularly large and particularly 'loaded' object. Only a few years later, Sayf al-Dawla's younger brother, Nāṣir al-Dawla Abū'l-Mutarrif 'Abd al-Raḥmān—known as Sanchuelo—had a document drafted, in which he was declared legitimate heir to the caliphal throne of Córdoba, thereby questioning the fundamental hereditary premise upon which caliphal legitimacy was founded, and unleashing more than two decades of unrest and civil war.¹⁷ This grab for the *imāma* almost paid off, and I believe this was because the very group of courtiers with whose collusion Sanchuelo could accomplish such an act was the intended audience for scenes on objects like the 'Pamplona' casket. The impact of their messages had been successful.

The casket is covered with an overall pattern of stylized vegetation, and each of the decorative fields it presents—front, back, sides and the facets of the lid—is divided by polylobed medallions similar to those which organize the visual field of the al-Mughīra pyxis. The medallions contain groups of figures or scenes that range in content from emblematic or battling animals to hunting or warring men, to a falcon-holding rider, to drinking and music-making. The subject matter on Sayf al-Dawla's casket is not randomly chosen or disposed; rather,

¹⁷ The text of this *risāla*, written by written by Abū Ḥafs ibn Burd al-Akbar, is recorded by Abū al-Hasan 'Alī ibn Bassām al-Shantarīnī, *Al-Dhakhīrah fī Mahāsīn Ahl al-Jazīrah* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Lajnat al-Ta'līf wa al-Tarjamah wa al-Nashr, 1939–), I, 1, pp. 84–85.

it is carefully divided between the front, back, lid and sides of the object, and it is in this disposition, as well as in the specificity of the images presented on its front, that the key to the programme's meaning resides. It is commonly (and logically) presumed that the 'Pamplona' casket was commissioned on the occasion of Sayf al-Dawla's 'conquest' (or raid) of León, which took place just before the date given by the inscription, and after which he received the honorary title of "Sayf al-Dawla" ("Sword of the State") from Hishām. To my knowledge, it has not been remarked in the existing literature that the battle imagery is confined to the back of the casket. Although the object could certainly have been picked up and turned around by viewers in order to examine the back, if the battle imagery were intended to be the principal focus of its programme, one would logically expect to find it on the front. Likewise, the emblematic scenes of animals locked in combat—which might be read as allegorical allusions to battle—are confined to the sides and lid of the casket. Themes of war, then, seem to be somewhat secondary to the piece's principal message.

Occupying the three large medallions into which the casket's front face is divided are scenes involving 'court' or 'courtly' activities; the specificity, however, of the 'courtliness' of these scenes (as opposed to other similar but not identical scenes on other objects) has not been addressed. Several of the pyxides surviving from the caliphal period proper combine similar images of pairs or groups of men seated and drinking or enjoying music together with other representations of activities which pertain to a court, or to court activity: the al-Mughīra pyxis, for example, combines an image of two beardless men seated together on a low platform, most commonly identified as a throne, with scenes of date-harvesting and egg-gathering of notoriously enigmatic significance. None, however, gives the specific and sustained importance to these themes accorded them by Sayf al-Dawla. In the context of the 'Pamplona' casket, then, they merit careful study.

A viewer—an Arabic-speaking one, at any rate—would begin his reading of the object in the manner to which his language had accustomed him: from right to left.¹⁸ This is consistent with the positioning of the principal inscription, which begins on the extreme right of the

¹⁸ I use the masculine pronoun in keeping with the homosocial nature of the royal *majlis al-uns* with which I believe the object is connected.

casket's front face with *bismi allāhi*...:¹⁹ the viewer's eyes would unquestionably have gravitated first to this point, beneath which they would have examined the first medallion. Represented is a man flanked by two attendants of decidedly smaller stature, a fact that would become particularly apparent if the man were to stand up. The attendant figures face him; both hold in their hands objects that might be interpreted as fans or flyswatters. The man, who is clearly intended to be read as mature, for he is represented with a full beard, holds in his left hand what might be either a flask of perfume or a drinking vessel (I tend toward the latter interpretation), and in the other, a flower, or a bunch of flowers. He is seated, and the attendants are standing, on a low platform upheld by a pair of beasts, perhaps lions, although they more closely resemble dogs or jackals.

One suggested identification of the mature male figure is the caliph, Hishām, based on an identification of the platform on which he sits as a throne, and because he wears a signet ring.²⁰ The reduced size of the attendant figures, likewise, is attributed to an implicit hierarchy—they are smaller because they are of lesser importance than the caliph. It should be noted, however, that Hishām's name appears nowhere in the inscription; nor, if we accept the version of the circumstances of the casket's commission offered above, was he involved in its production in any way other than by conferring (probably, given the turn Hishām's luck had taken, under some duress) an honorific title. I read the bearded figure as Sayf al-Dawla himself; he was the protagonist of the battle and the designated recipient of the casket, as well as its most likely commissioner. I will return to the issue of the attendants in a moment; at present it is sufficient to note the logic of Sayf al-Dawla's insertion

¹⁹ Closer consideration of the exact placement of the inscriptions on these objects would yield much information as to their correct readings: Rosser-Owen, for instance ("A Córdoba Ivory Pyxis Lid," pp. 18, 24–26) discusses the placement of the inscription on the Ashmolean lid, noting that it begins at the back of the object to allow the patron's name to appear in the exact centre of the front, so that it would be the first point of encounter of a viewer's eyes with the pyxis. In the case of the 'Pamplona' casket, it is interesting to note that Sayf al-Dawla's name and title are relegated to the left side of the object. Perhaps he did not wish to draw attention to it, given the heavy-hitting gesture he was making with the commission? Or perhaps it is because the casket was intended to be viewed by an audience who needed no convincing.

²⁰ *Al-Andalus*, cat. no. 4, p. 198. Sophie Makariou, on the other hand, has argued for the identification of this figure with Sayf al-Dawla: see her article "Quelques réflexions sur les objets au nom d' 'Abd al-Malik ibn al-Manṣūr", *Archéologie Islamique* 11 (2001) pp. 47–60.

of an image of himself at the beginning of the programme: he is at the centre of the casket's message and significance, and it is logically with his image that the viewer's eyes first make contact.

The second medallion is occupied by three diminutive figures playing musical instruments. Holod explains their scale by the placement, above their heads and within the medallion, of a rectangular plaque to which one half of a clasp, now lost, would have been attached. One might take issue with this, however, for there are several other solutions which could have been applied should the figures have *needed* to be larger. The most obvious one would have been to use a smaller clasp—given that the object was a (quasi-) royal commission, the clasp was probably custom-made, and the necessities of the figural programme would take precedence over the size or placement of a purely functional appendage of no significance to the object's meaning, should the two exigencies conflict. Likewise, the clasp could have been moved slightly upward, where it would have blocked parts of the medallion, rather than obscuring potentially useful decorative field. Finally, of course, the number of figures could have been reduced to two, and the clasp plaque could have been turned vertically, rather than horizontally, thus allowing the incorporation of full-sized figures, had such been desired. Preference, then, was probably for small figures, whose dimensions and proportions are similar to those of Sayf al-Dawla's attendants.

In the third medallion, two beardless male figures, probably intended to be perceived as more youthful than the ruler figure in the first medallion, are represented. They are symmetrically disposed and face one another. Both hold a flask or a cup (again, I think these are drinking vessels) identical to that held in Sayf al-Dawla's left hand.²¹ The figure on the right holds a branch or a spray of leaves in his second hand; the man on the left, in addition to the flask or cup, holds an object that is somewhat difficult to identify: long, straight and slim, one wonders if it might perhaps be a pen box, or a sheaf of something upon which

²¹ Holod sees these objects as perfume flasks. While there is no definitive proof in favour of their identification, one might note the striking variety of shapes and formats, many with relatively slender necks, of small containers produced right about this time, for example, *Al-Andalus*, no. 12, p. 213. While some of these objects probably served as perfume containers, it is doubtful that all did. The gestures, however, of the figures who hold these objects on Sayf al-Dawla's casket seem more appropriate to the activities involved in the serving and consuming of wine, rather than to perfuming: the attendant, for example, to Sayf al-Dawla's right holds a flask high and tipped as he faces his master, in what would seem to be a movement preparatory to pouring.

to write. The men are positioned informally, with the soles of their feet in clear view, in the standard representation of someone sitting cross-legged; their heads are inclined toward one another, their features animated as though engaged in conversation. They, too, are seated on a platform that Holod identifies as a lion throne.

It should be observed, though, that the 'throne' on which the two young men rest is identical to the one on which Sayf al-Dawla perches, and if we look again at the central musician in the central medallion, we notice that he, too, is seated on a 'throne'; there are no lions beneath it, but the object is otherwise quite similar to the other two. 'Throne' as a term used to refer to these pieces of furniture should perhaps be replaced with the more neutral 'platform', given that all but two of the figures occupy one. The even distribution of these platforms, along with the identical nature of the vessels held in the hands of all figures but the musicians and the attendants, gives an air, not of hierarchy, but of intimate equality, to the scenes, and indeed to the entire front face of the casket.

I propose that we read this deliberate concentration of 'courtly' scenes on the front of Sayf al-Dawla's casket—to the exclusion of other possible material with which they might have been combined (for the three scenes repeat, or extemporize on, the same theme, and when read together, constitute segments of one larger scene, something which is unusual in other ivories)—as a *majlis al-uns*. The image, in other words, constitutes a visual representation of the sensual, intimate, literary and, above all, *pleasurable* gatherings which, quite suddenly, were a major focus of court literature starting precisely during the reign of al-Manṣūr ibn Abī 'Āmir. Read in this context, elements such as the diminutive attendants and the equally distributed receptacles and bunches of leaves or flowers, which are difficult to explain if considered against the backdrop of a tradition of 'royal ceremony', begin to make sense. The representation of hierarchical distinction through diminishing size is not characteristic of the visual culture of al-Andalus, and we must therefore search for some other explanation for the representation of attendants and musicians on a smaller scale.

A reading of the casket's front as representing a *majlis al-uns* provides the key that unlocks the mystery: the figures are represented as smaller, not because they are of lesser importance, but because they *are* smaller. They are boys. One of the boys on Sayf al-Dawla's left, proffering a bottle of wine, can be identified as a *sāqī*. The attendants and musicians, as well as the two little figures which nestle provocatively atop

lush plants on either side of the central medallion (whose presence has not, to my knowledge, been addressed before), are representations of the poetic *sine qua non* for any good *khamriyya*, and for a large percentage of good *ghazal*. Gifted with night vision and deadly glances, bearers of the sweet agonies of lovesickness, these androgynous little *fityān* are hardly of inferior significance: they are of importance equal to—if not indeed greater than—the sovereign's within the confines of the poetic universe into which the *ḥājib* has quite literally inserted himself.

The supremely sexualizing replacement, in the leafy world between the medallions, of blooms with boys atop the sinuous, stylized curves of the stems out of which they, again quite literally, appear to sprout, must have greatly amused Sayf al-Dawla's courtiers, who themselves would have been the authors of many metaphors likening boys' lips to myrtles, and their slim waists to *bān* trees. And if we allow our eyes to travel, as these courtiers certainly must have, just down below the suggestive V's formed by the nexus of branches which cup the flower-boys' rumps, we notice symmetrically disposed clusters of blooms or bunches of grapes, which are exactly replicated in the bouquet held delicately by Sayf al-Dawla in the gracefully curved fingers of his right hand. Again, the association is unlikely to have been missed by the keenly poetic intellects of the *nudamā'*.

Traditional art historical practice would dictate that we seek the origins of this cluster of blooms among the royal attributes held, say, by Sasanian kings on the silver dishes and vessels so prized at that period, rather than looking around at the specific cultural horizon upon which the object in question appeared. The flowers held by Sayf al-Dawla, for instance, find their corollaries in the blooms presented to 'Āmirī, *fitna* and early *tā'ifā* sovereigns by their *nudamā'*, as recorded over and over again by "Habīb" (the pseudonym of the eleventh-century *adab* poet, al-Ḥimyarī) in his *Kitāb al-Badī' fī Wasf al-Rabī'*, as gifts, most often accompanied by verses on lyric themes—such as the description (*wasf*) of those very flowers—intended as panegyric to their recipient. The association between verses and flowers is apparent throughout the anthology's text, as it is in "Habīb"'s presentation of the anthology—a bouquet of verses—to al-Mu'tadid ibn 'Abbād. One of the *nudamā'* in the left medallion also holds a plant, and the similarity of gesture and attribute in the personae of courtier and sovereign further confirms my interpretation of intimate equality typical of the *majlis al-uns*, rather than the hierarchical differences established through most court ceremony. Read in the context of the *majlis al-uns*, the possible identi-

fication for the enigmatic object held in the right hand of the second *nadīm* as a pen box or other writing material also makes sense: ‘Āmirī court culture was nothing if not self-consciously literary, and the *majlis al-uns* was the primary forum for the ruler’s and courtiers’ display of their poetic prowess. Many are the references in the anthologies cited here to verses of loving praises being exchanged on pieces of paper or (more probably) parchment (*ruq‘a*), often inscribed in the heat of poetic inspiration in the context of a *majlis al-uns*.

All this is not, of course, to say that battle imagery is excluded from the significance of the programme on Sayf al-Dawla’s casket. It is present and, indeed, dominant everywhere on the piece except its front. Given the object’s clear separation of warlike and pleasure imagery, it might be that it was designed to present the two principal aspects, as Sayf al-Dawla and his courtiers conceived them, of the royal, or the more generally noble, subject. On the front—and, in the context of this object and its audience, clearly accorded the position of greater importance—we meet the Andalusī version of Gerald Bond’s “Loving Subject” *avant la lettre*,²² while on the back, the ruler and noble’s ‘other’ incarnation as a soldier is represented. Neither should we overlook latent allusions to the pleasures of paradise, which might have whispered to viewers from the casket’s front. Endlessly flowing wine, the privilege of reclining on couches dressed in green silks, and the pleasures offered by eternally virginal *hourīs* were, after all, among the rewards promised by the Qur’ān to those who died martyrs, whether on the battlefield, or (according to some) on the field of ‘courtly’ love’s merciless exigencies. Likewise, the cryptic combination of references in the casket’s inscription to “good works” (battles won in the name of Islam) through which Sayf al-Dawla was to achieve everlasting joy and happiness, in fact, might find their explanation in this context.

The implications of this public and programmed ‘courtliness’ at ‘Āmirī courts early in the eleventh century for the later development of ‘courtly’ culture in al-Andalus, the ‘Christian’ north and neighbouring Provence are provocative. As I have argued elsewhere, the ‘Pamplona’

²² Gerald Bond, *The Loving Subject: Desire, Eloquence and Power in Romanesque France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995); our Andalusī “Loving Subject” has a great deal in common with his (or her) French Romanesque cousin. For Bond, the “persona” is consciously assumed, the “subject” to some extent socially created, and I believe that both terms as rigorously defined by Bond in his introductory chapter apply to the new ‘courtly’ royal and elite ideal visible in early eleventh-century court literature.

casket—as well as other objects which belong most immediately to the realm of Andalusī ‘courtly’ culture—meant a great deal more than booty to the Christians who viewed them.²³ Indeed, it is probably correct to view the courts of the Banū ‘Āmir as existing at the origins of what would become a pan-European court culture of courtly love. The magnificent ‘Pamplona’ casket is a key visualisation of the moment those origins took shape.

²³ Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, Part II, and eadem, “Courtly Courts as Sites of Cultural Interaction”.

PART III

UNCOVERING ALMOHAD IBERIA

EVOLUTION OF THE ANDALUSI URBAN LANDSCAPE: FROM THE DISPERSED TO THE SATURATED MEDINA

*Julio Navarro and Pedro Jiménez**

If we review the historiography on Islamic urbanism, one of the fundamental issues from the pioneering studies to the contemporary critic has been the supposedly static character of the medina, an issue which has also been raised in recent critical discussions regarding the relevance of the notion of the timeless Islamic city.¹ Today, almost all scholars accept that the medina is not an immutable entity and that it is untenable to argue that in the medieval period the medina was like the traditional examples which have survived to the twentieth century. Nevertheless, no doubt due to the difficulty of gathering relevant data, an explanation of the original character of these medinas and the processes by which they evolved into the archetype described by early Orientalist scholars has yet to appear.²

Most scholars accept that Islamic cities did not originally resemble those of the nineteenth century, and that they were not constructed with disordered cores, dead-end alleys, and quarters, which are supposedly characteristic of the Islamic city. We felt the subject needed to move forward, and we wanted to answer questions such as “What were the first cities founded by Muslims like? How did they evolve over time, up to the point at which they took on the appearance described by earlier scholars?”. We therefore published in 2003 a comprehensive article entitled “Sobre la Ciudad Islámica y su Evolución”, and in the following year a summary called “Evolución del Paisaje Urbano Andalusi: de la

* Translated by Glaire D. Anderson.

¹ See Robert Ilbert, “La ville islamique: réalité et abstraction”, *Les Cahiers de la Recherche Architecturale* 10–11 (1982), pp. 6–13; Janet L. Abu-Lughod, “The Islamic City: Historic Myth, Islamic Essence and Contemporary Relevance”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (1987), pp. 155–177; André Raymond, “Ville musulmane, ville arabe: mythes orientalistes et recherches récentes”, in *Panoramas Urbains: Situation de l'Histoire des Villes*, ed. Jean-Louis Biget and Jean-Claude Hervé (Fontenay-aux-Roses: Presses de l'ENS, 1995), pp. 309–336.

² See Abu-Lughod, “The Islamic City”.

Medina Dispersa a la Saturada”,³ in which we tried to determine the principals which governed the processes of urban transformation over time, which García-Bellido has defined as the “morphogenetic rules”. The principles which we deduced are very general and can be applied to settlements of different time periods and different cultures, so long as we keep in mind the specific historical and physical factors which determined the development of each city. Nevertheless, we believe that the resulting model, summarized in this article, can be useful in understanding the evolution of medieval medinas (Fig. 1). We have based our model on three sources: archaeological information, in particular from two exceptional sites which we have excavated ourselves, Siyāsa and Murcia; on ethnoarchaeological studies;⁴ and on written sources, especially the Arabic texts.

1. CONSTITUTION

In the medieval period, the construction of city walls was the culmination of the first, or constitutive, stage. This phase is characterized by the existence of wide, unbuilt intramural zones intended for use as orchards and gardens. Also forming part of the intramural zone of the city in its earliest phase are phenomena traditionally designated as periurban: cemeteries, pottery kilns, tanneries, etc. These elements form the subject of the following sections.

1.1. *Foundation Walls*

Almost always present in the medieval city, the construction of the first walls is one of the milestones of the medina’s formative period. Apart from defensive and topographical considerations, their route was planned and conditioned in order to enclose large empty zones,

³ This is an adapted translation of that second article, see Julio Navarro Palazón and Pedro Jiménez Castillo, “Evolución del Paisaje Urbano Andalusi: de la Medina Dispersa a la Saturada”, in Fátima Roldán Castro ed., *Paisaje y naturaleza en al-Andalus* (Granada: El Legado Andalusi, 2003), pp. 232–267.

⁴ Ethnoarchaeology is the study of a society’s institutions based on examination of its material attributes. See Michèle Biewers, “Occupation de l’espace dans le village traditionnel de ‘Aima: approche ethnoarchéologique”, *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan IV* (Amman, Department of Antiquities, 1992) pp. 397–402; Olivier Aurenche, “Pour une ethnoarchéologie des cycles d’évolution dans l’habitat rural du Proche-Orient”, *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan V* (Amman, Department of Antiquities, 1995), pp. 307–319.

EVOLUTION OF THE ISLAMIC CITY

TRADITIONAL PATTERN

NEW PROPOSAL

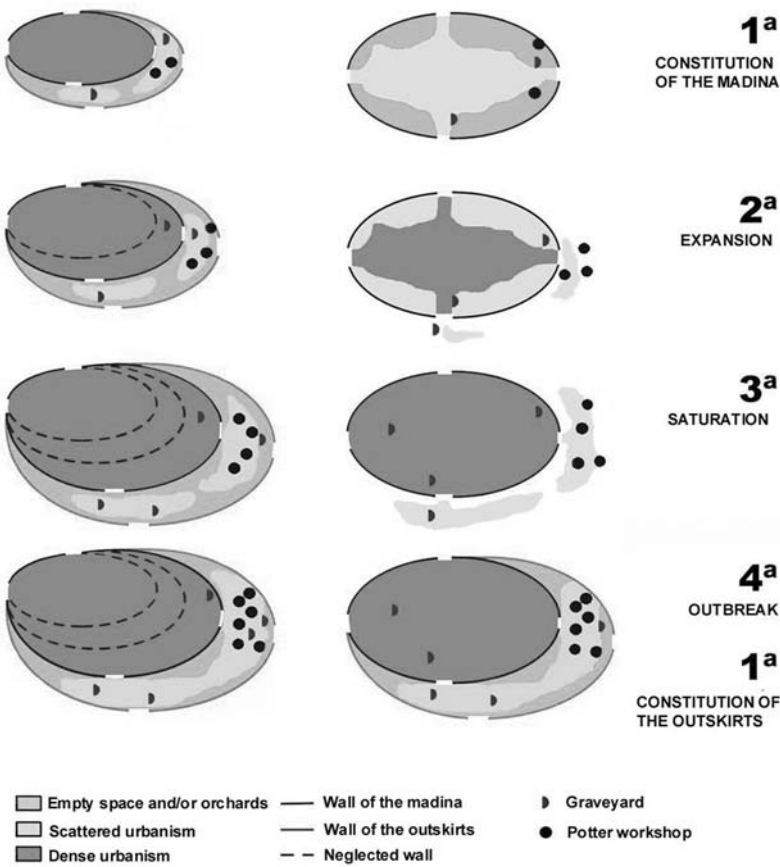


Fig. 1. Evolution of the Islamic city.

especially in the periphery of the inhabited nucleus. Lézine based his demographic calculations of medieval Islamic cities upon the area of mosques and comparisons with the extension of an individual city's walled perimeters. Lézine did not link the expansion of the walled centre to any foresight on the part of medieval architects, but rather to the "galloping demography" of the times.⁵ However, Lézine's model does not adequately recognize planning foresight in the early phase of a city's urban development. In contrast, we would argue that the empty spaces which, like a belt, sit between the town and the walls can only be understood as reserved areas destined for later development, as the city's growth required. Therefore, an understanding of city walls constructed to protect the earliest Andalusi cities can illuminate formative urban processes, when examined in conjunction with written sources and archaeological evidence.

Understanding the routes of early Islamic urban walls is at present central to the study of urbanism, offering a corrective to tendencies which establish the extension and characteristics of medieval cities as based on unfounded and *a priori* conjecture: for example, the tendency to always characterize orchards, potteries and cemeteries as periurban phenomena. On the contrary, medieval walls constructed in the early phase of a medieval city's urban development delimited a dispersed urban landscape in which ample productive agricultural land was found alongside artisanal and commercial areas and cemeteries. In this early stage the city was not saturated, and therefore had no need to expel to its margins that which at later stages can be understood as periurban phenomena.

1.2. *Empty spaces within the walls*

Another stereotype with a long historiographical tradition is that of the notion of a contrast between medieval Christian and medieval Islamic cities: the former are viewed as spaces in which towns and unbuilt areas lived in harmony, while the latter are usually associated with an urban fabric in which unbuilt zones are scarce or do not exist at all. Lézine was among the first to criticize this idea, noting that just two or three centuries ago, descriptions indicate that pre-modern Islamic cities included open spaces, public squares, gardens and orchards, which have

⁵ Alexandre Lézine, *Deux villes d'Ifrigiya* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1971), p. 20.

subsequently disappeared; medieval Islamic urbanism was therefore much more “airy” than the well-known case studies may have appeared in the nineteenth century.⁶ Certainly, textual evidence indicates that the presence of orchards and gardens within the pre-modern Islamic city was considered a sign of health and quality of life, while their absence denoted congestion and unhealthiness.⁷ Some who identified the existence of such spaces in the Islamic city suggested that their presence could be explained for military reasons, understanding the orchards as destined to secure the provisioning of food for the city in the event of a siege.⁸ Others interpreted them as symptoms of urban decline, a judgement which is only occasionally accurate.⁹ In our opinion, this belt of unbuilt spaces and/or orchards located between the built core and the city wall, intended to absorb the future growth of the city, is a characteristic element of the medina’s formative period.

Other unbuilt spaces existed in the very heart of the city, often attached directly to adjacent residences and, in combination with the unbuilt zones at the perimeter of the town, created an urban fabric with a dispersed appearance. The deserted Jordanian site of Umm al-Jimal, the tenth-century palace city of Madīnat al-Zahrā’ in Córdoba, and the cities of Siyāsa and Murcia (both prov. Murcia), provide interesting and complementary information about the dispersed nature of the Islamic city during its formative stages.

Umm al-Jimal (Fig. 2) is a rare example of a dispersed city which was abandoned before its conversion into a so-called traditional city. It has therefore been preserved at an early stage of street formation, when large, open spaces still predominated in the urban fabric.¹⁰ In the plans, one can clearly make out city blocks and the large houses

⁶ Lézine, *Deux villes*, pp. 124–125.

⁷ S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society. The Jewish communities of the Arab world as portrayed in the documents of the Cairo Geniza*. Vol. IV: Daily life (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1983), p. 47.

⁸ Hamid Triki, “Marrakech: retrato histórico de una metrópoli medieval. Siglos XI–XII”, in *La Arquitectura del Islam Occidental*, edited by Rafael López Guzmán (Granada: El Legado Andalusi, 1995), pp. 93–106.

⁹ This is the case at Samarra, Kufa and Basra in the eleventh century: see Thierry Bianquis, “Derrière qui prieras-tu, vendredi? Réflexions sur les espaces publics et privés, dans la ville arabe médiévale”, *Bulletin d’Études Orientales* XXXVII–XXXVIII (1985–1986), pp. 7–21.

¹⁰ Bert De Vries, “Urbanization in the Basalt Region of North Jordan in Late Antiquity: the case of Umm al-Jimal”, *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan II* (Amman-London: Department of Antiquities, 1985), pp. 249–256.

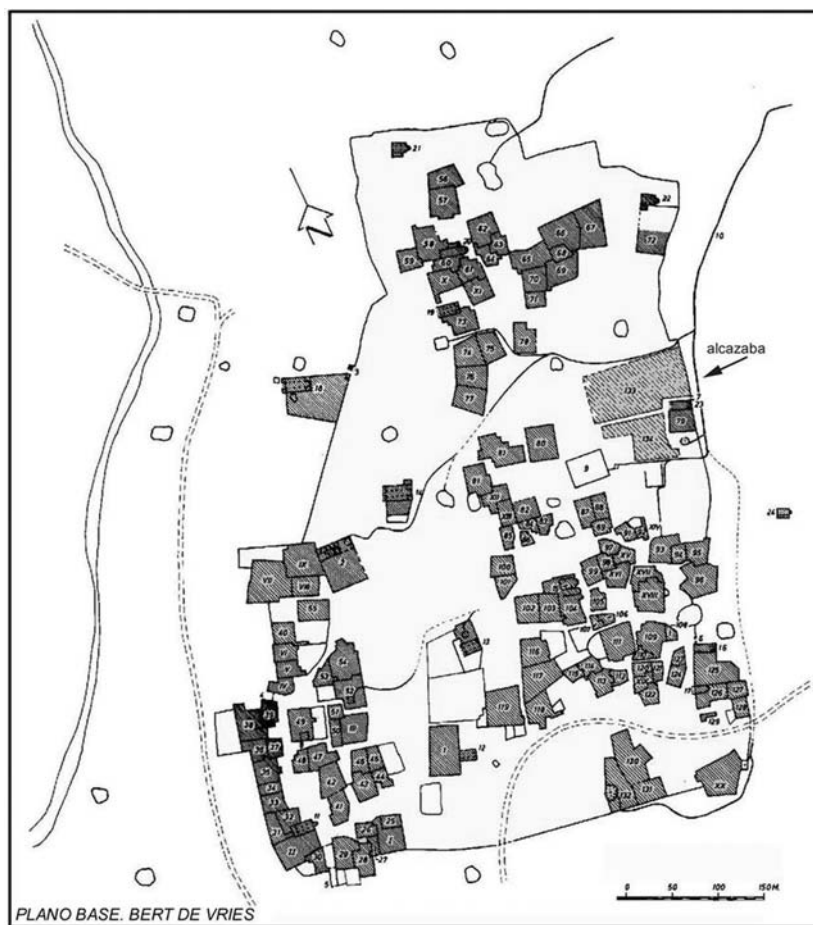


Fig. 2. Umm al-Jimal (Jordan). Byzantine site abandoned in the Umayyad period. Note the large empty spaces, and the streets in the process of formation in the areas where the town increases in density.

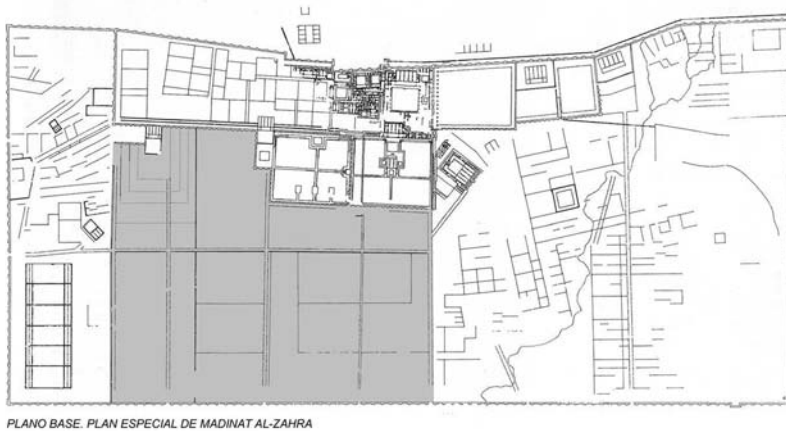


Fig. 3. Madīnat al-Zahrā' (Córdoba, tenth century). Highlighted area indicates zone likely used for cultivation in the form of orchards.

which developed by joining together domestic units, when excess space still existed within the walled enclosure.

In contrast, Madīnat al-Zahrā' (Fig. 3) presents a geometric organization, but it also illustrates the appearance of a city before the advent of the later phases of saturation and overflow. In the plan published by Vallejo, wide interior zones free from construction, and of uncertain function, are clearly visible, preserved at their formative stage because of the early destruction of the city.¹¹ Traces of the regular organization characteristic of irrigated lands are visible in the large space situated in the centre of the city, suggesting that this zone was intended for use as cultivated land, probably, in fact, as orchards.

In addition to extensive land reserves between the town and the walls, the first family groups to settle within the city of Murcia provided for ample free space between houses (Fig. 4). No material evidence exists for the function of these spaces, though it is logical to suppose that they were associated with the families who resided in close proximity to the plots, and that they may have been used as orchards or gardens. Al-Maqqarī supports this picture of early Murcia when he notes it was "called *al-Bustān* (the Garden/Orchard) for its numerous enclosed

¹¹ Antonio Vallejo Triano, "El proyecto urbanístico del Estado califal: Madīnat al-Zahrā'", in *La Arquitectura del Islam Occidental*, pp. 69–81. See also Vallejo Fig. 1 in this volume, and p. 6 in his discussion.

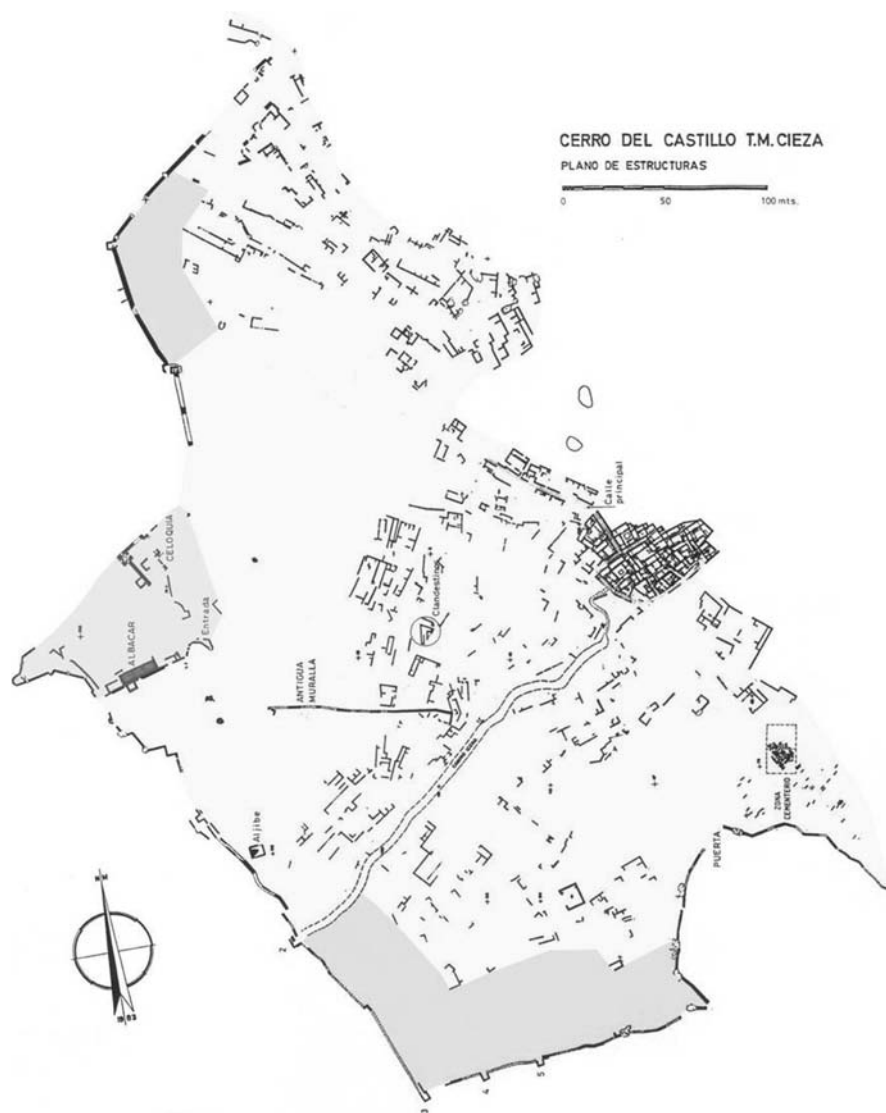


Fig. 4. Abandoned town of Siyāsa (modern Cieza, prov. Murcia, twelfth-thirteenth centuries). Plan of the site with visible remains and excavated area, the fortress and cemetery. The peripheral sectors between the castle and the wall, which never became urbanized, are highlighted.

orchards".¹² The orchards to which al-Maqqarī referred were not those of the famous and extensive plain of the Segura river, where cultivated plots with walls were incompatible with traditional systems of community irrigation. Rather, al-Maqqarī was describing orchards located within the city itself, and from which the city derived its name. These were eventually built upon in response to the city's population growth.

The abandoned site of Siyāsa offers another example of an ample open zone within a walled urban centre (Fig. 4). The plan of the site indicates that its southern face and the interior sectors next to the wall were free from construction, indicating that this zone was reserved for the natural growth of the community. In Siyāsa there also exist earlier empty areas between houses, which were only built up later, as we will discuss below.

1.3. *Intramural cemeteries*

Since the cemeteries of cities which survived into the nineteenth century were situated outside the city walls, they are considered one of the typically suburban elements of the pre-modern medina. As a result, historians often interpret cemeteries located within medieval city walls as exterior foundations which were incorporated into the urban enclosure by the expansion of the walls. However, a failure to distinguish between the dispersed and saturated phases of medieval cities leads to the incorrect conclusion that cemeteries were not part of the original urban nuclei. In fact, residents of medieval cities had no problem with including cemeteries within the walled urban centre.

Textual evidence again supports this assertion: for example, in Basra (founded 638), each of the Arab tribes received a territorial demarcation, or *khitta*, in which to establish their houses. According to al-Mawardī, at the centre of each of these five quarters, which surrounded the congregational mosque and the Dār al-Imāra, a wide open space (*rahba*) was reserved to serve as stabling for horses, for prayer, and as a cemetery.¹³ Likewise, in each *khitta* of the twenty which made up Kufa, founded

¹² Alfonso Carmona González, "Murcia ¿Una fundación árabe? (Nuevos datos y conclusiones)", in *Murcia Musulmana*, ed. Francisco J. Flores Arroyuelo et al. (Murcia: Ediciones Almudí, 1989), pp. 85–147.

¹³ Jamel Akbar, *Crisis in the Built Environment: the Case of the Muslim City* (Singapore: Concept Media Pte Ltd., 1988), p. 86; see also Nezar Alsayyad, *Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism* (Wesport: Greenwood, 1991), pp. 51–53.

about the same time as Basra, the tribes established their own mosque and their own place of burial.¹⁴

In Murcia, cemeteries were not only sited within the walls, but were founded at an early period within pre-existing structures, normally houses (Fig. 5).¹⁵ This phenomenon constitutes eloquent proof that in the dispersed city the presence of intramural burial sites is not exceptional. Perhaps the most paradigmatic case is that of San Nicolás (Murcia) which, in the second half of the tenth century, was occupied by a pottery workshop. A large house was subsequently constructed on the site of the pottery workshop, which in turn was transformed into a cemetery, a function which the site maintained until the conquest.¹⁶ Other examples of this phenomenon exist, most notably one located in the heart of the city on the street known as Polo de Medina, once a sumptuous residence of the caliphal period which, in the eleventh century, had a cemetery installed within it. Again, it retained this function to the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century.¹⁷

The city of Denia provides another interesting case, in which the cemetery was located not only within the walls, but adjacent to the main city gate, and opening onto the main street. With the passage of time and the pressing need for space, the tombs eventually encroached into the street.¹⁸ Other examples exist in Orihuela, Balaguer, Valencia and Alicante.¹⁹ In Pechina, the town and cemetery are separated by a single street, but due to the usual assumption that the cemetery was always situated outside the walls, the burials were interpreted as a progressive

¹⁴ Akbar, *Crisis in the Built Environment*, p. 88.

¹⁵ Pedro Jiménez Castillo and Julio Navarro Palazón, "Génesis y evolución urbana de Murcia en la Edad Media", in *Murcia ayer y hoy* (Murcia: Ayuntamiento de Murcia, 2000), pp. 40–130, especially pp. 92–94.

¹⁶ Julio Navarro Palazón, "El cementerio islámico de San Nicolás de Murcia. Memoria Preliminar", in *Actas del I Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española*, vol. IV (Zaragoza: Diputación General de Aragón, 1986), pp. 7–37.

¹⁷ Indalecio Pozo Martínez, "El cementerio islámico de la calle Polo de Medina (Murcia)", in *Actas del III Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española* (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1992), pp. 413–421.

¹⁸ Josep A. Gisbert, "Dāniya y la vila de Denia. En torno al urbanismo de una ciudad medieval", in *Urbanismo medieval del País Valenciano*, ed. R. Azuar et al. (Madrid: Polifemo, 1993), pp. 63–103.

¹⁹ Josep Giralt Balagueró, "Balaguer", in *Catalunya Romànica*, vol. XVII (Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1994), pp. 219–251; Rafael González Villaescusa, "El barrio del Carmen de Valencia: análisis morfológico e historia urbana", *Madridrer Mitteilungen* 41 (2000), pp. 410–435; Pablo Rosser Limiñana, "La ciudad de Alicante y la arqueología del poblamiento en época medieval islámica", in *Urbanismo Medieval del País Valenciano*, pp. 27–62.

abandonment of the houses. The ceramic evidence, however, indicates that the houses and cemetery were actually contemporary.²⁰

These examples demonstrate that intramural cemeteries found in saturated nuclei in al-Andalus cannot automatically be interpreted as originally extramural foundations which had been included within medieval walled centres at a later date. The fact that intramural cemeteries have been found in Murcia and elsewhere suggests that their presence was not an exclusively local phenomenon, but one that may have been a general characteristic of medieval Islamic urbanism. As a result, the value of cemeteries for measuring and dating urban development in al-Andalus needs to be redefined.

1.4. *Workshops within the walls*

Traditional historiography also considers artisanal workshops, especially pottery workshops and tanneries, to be typically periurban phenomena. Archaeological evidence and medieval texts do not support this, however, since the model that has been traditionally employed by scholars reflects a later urban reality, distinct from that of earlier periods. The following examples demonstrate that the placement of artisanal installations depends largely on the degree of saturation of the urban fabric and, finally, on the availability of space within the walled enclosure.²¹

In Murcia, houses as well as artisanal installations (whose products would have been sold in the adjacent market) were located behind the shops which flanked the city's principal artery. Two workshops devoted to glass production were located very near the Great Mosque, the smaller of which opened onto Plaza Belluga (Fig. 5).²² Likewise, the excavation of three sites associated with metal manufacture—specifically small forges and waste sites—indicate that in Islamic Murcia metalware and glass workers were present near the nodes of commercialization.

²⁰ Francisco Castillo Galdeano et al., "Urbanismo e industria en Bayyāna. Pechina (Almería)", in *Actas del II Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española. Vol. II. Comunicaciones* (Madrid: Comunidad Autónoma, 1987), pp. 539–548.

²¹ André Raymond, "Le déplacement des tanneries à Alep, au Caire et à Tunis à l'époque ottomane: «un indicateur» de croissance urbaine", *Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine* 7–8 (1977), pp. 192–200.

²² Pedro Jiménez Castillo et al., "Les ateliers urbains de verriers de Murcia au XII^e s. (C. Puxmarina et Pl. Belluga)", in *Arts du feu et productions artisanales. XX^{èmes} Rencontres internationales d'Antibes*, ed. P. Pétrequin, P. Fluzin, J. Thiriot, P. Benoit (Antibes: APDCA, 2000), pp. 433–452.

Pottery workshops, dating to the tenth and eleventh centuries, were also located inside the walled centre (Fig. 5).²³ Their presence has been interpreted as proof of the existence of a smaller, pre-existing perimeter wall, but this hypothesis is unfounded given the evidence we have presented for workshops, cemeteries and open spaces within the medieval city during the early dispersed phase. While pottery workshops were present within the medina walls, they tended to be located in peripheral areas, in order to avoid creating a nuisance or danger from firing the kilns.

Other examples of intramural artisanal sites include a tenth-century kiln in the medina of Alicante, and three kilns located within the fortified enclosure of the Plano de Almatá, in the old medina of Balaguer.²⁴

The practice of locating such establishments within the city walls has been well analyzed in eastern Islamic cities such as Aleppo, where

artisanal activities which were polluting or unpleasant to the environment, such as dyeing, forging, coppersmithing and, above all, tanning, and which later would be installed in the suburbs or beyond the built zones were, at the time of the Ottoman period or even earlier, all *intra muros* and very close to the centre. In fact, these were essentially urban activities, and therefore integrated into the city fabric, despite their unpleasantness.²⁵

2. EXPANSION

While expansion is common to nearly all cities, in the case of the medieval medinas, growth was not necessarily planned by a central authority. As Akbar has shown, the majority of Islamic nuclei expanded themselves over time under private initiative, although not at random, but in accordance with specific principles which shaped the development of the city, based on numerous small-scale decisions made by residents.²⁶

While the term 'urban expansion' as applied to the medieval city often refers to the occupation of extramural areas, we use it here strictly in reference to the development of the walled centre at the expense of

²³ Navarro Palazón, "El cementerio islámico de San Nicolás".

²⁴ Rosser Limiñana, "La ciudad de Alicante", p. 43; Giralte Balagueró, "Balaguer", pp. 242–243.

²⁵ Jean-Claude David, *La Suwayyat 'Alī à Alep* (Damas: Publication de l'Institut Français d'Études Arabes de Damas, 1998), p. 131.

²⁶ Akbar, *Crisis in the Built Environment*, p. 71.

orchards and/or gardens, artisanal installations and, in certain cases, empty space within the walls. Three models of expansion can be identified, based on the developed area within the medina. The first two models develop on unconstructed terrain: the first in the large open areas between the limits of the built core of the town and the wall (expansion in a strict sense), while the second consists of building over the small empty spaces which exist within the town (densification). This subdivision is somewhat arbitrary, since a clearly-defined limit does not always exist between the constructed zone and large reserved areas. It is a useful division, but it is also important to keep in mind that, from the urban-planning point of view, it is not the same to occupy and transform the spaces in small domestic orchards, and those in empty residual spaces left between older houses. In the first case, we can observe a tendency inherited from parcelling rural plots; in the second, new constructions are usually conditioned by the preexisting town.²⁷

The third model of expansion develops on top of artisanal installations, normally tanneries and potteries, which are displaced outside the walled centre. We will discuss below the expansion over intramural cemeteries which, although rare, is another well-documented archaeological phenomenon.

2.1. *The town periphery*

This section addresses urban expansion into intramural spaces previously occupied by artisanal workshops or by cemeteries, two features of the dispersed city which, in many cases, were finally displaced outside the walled centre once the medina reached the point of saturation. This phenomenon is evident on the north side of the medina of Murcia, in the strip located between Calle Platería and the city wall (Fig. 5). This zone appears to have been occupied by orchards and gardens which effected the form of new residential blocks, whose regular appearance contrasts with those south of Calle Platería, where the oldest buildings are situated. These urban orchards, delimited by the access roads to the different plots and by the canals which irrigated them, present the regular rectilinear form characteristic of cultivated spaces.²⁸ As these

²⁷ These expansion phenomena can occur simultaneously, as was the case at Kufa. As new groups of settlers arrived, they chose from two solutions: if there were few inhabitants in a *khitta* (a plot or tribal demarcation), new arrivals might settle there; if there were already many residents, a new *khitta* was founded.

²⁸ González Villacusa, "El barrio del Carmen de Valencia", pp. 65–66.

zones were progressively built up, they maintained their pre-existing structure; had they not, one might have supposed an intervention on the part of the state.

Seville's medina probably preserves the best example of this type of regular intramural block, markedly different from those surrounding it (Fig. 6).²⁹ It encompasses the north-western sector of the city, between the Real and Vibarragel gates.³⁰ Sufficient evidence survives to indicate that this sector, occupied by structures surrounded by gardens and orchards, remained in an expansion phase until the conquest in 1248.³¹ However, we are the first to conclude that its regularity reflects the agricultural character of its initial formation.³²

2.2. *Sites within the core of the medina: Densification*

The phenomenon of intramural densification is well-documented in the abandoned town of Siyāsa (Fig. 8). The best example is the enlargement of house number five, which was expanded into an empty space west of house number four. Here a second domestic nucleus was constructed, between houses twelve, four and six, whose plan reflects the difficulties of placing a building with a central courtyard in an elongated, residual site.

²⁹ A similar arrangement of city blocks is located in the Axares quarter of Granada, and in Jaén, in the area between the old gates of San Agustín and Sol: see Vicente Salvatierra and Eva Alcázar, "La distribución del agua en Jaén durante el período islámico", *Arqueología Medieval* 4 (1996), pp. 95–106.

³⁰ Part of this sector is occupied by the neighbourhood of San Vicente. Some have argued that this area postdates the 1248 conquest, while others identify it as an Almohad project. See Manuel Vera Reina, "Urbanismo medieval en la ciudad de Sevilla. El barrio de San Vicente", in *Actas del II Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española*, vol. III (Madrid: Comunidad Autónoma, 1987), pp. 203–211; Manuel Ación Almansa, "La formación del tejido urbano en al-Andalus", *La ciudad medieval: de la casa al tejido urbano* (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2001), pp. 11–32.

³¹ Documentary and archaeological evidence exists for the occupation of this zone during the Islamic period, namely the two so-called Baths of the Reina Mora and the remains of a large residential structure beneath the monastery of San Clemente. See Vera Reina, "Urbanismo medieval en la ciudad de Sevilla"; Miguel A. Tabales Rodríguez, "El edificio musulmán localizado bajo el monasterio de San Clemente", in *Sevilla Almohade*, ed. Magdalena Valor Piechotta and Ahmed Tahiri (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, Junta de Andalucía, 1999), pp. 151–153.

³² Without referring specifically to this zone, Almagro Gorbea, when he studied the urbanism of medieval Seville, observed that the very regular layout of the roads was due to the wide areas occupied by gardens and orchards, which were later built over: see Antonio Almagro Gorbea, "Planimetría de las ciudades hispanomusulmanas", *Al-Qantara* VIII (1987), pp. 442–448.

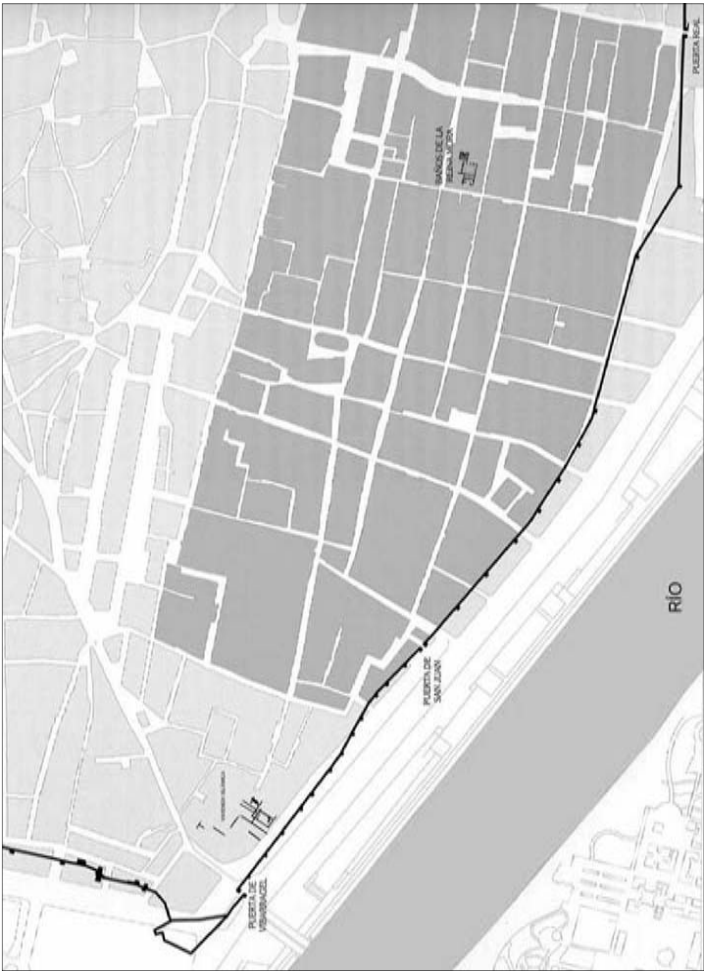


Fig. 6. Medina of Seville. Intramural peripheral zone formed by regular blocks whose outlines suggest an originally agricultural function.



Fig. 7. The division of plots.

Murcia provides at least three well-documented cases. All were empty spaces which remained as such in the centre of the medina up to the twelfth century, while remains of buildings, some from the tenth century, surround them. An empty space existed within the block known as Platería 14. The space remained empty until the twelfth century, when two additional houses were built, attached to the earlier residence.³³ The excavation of another early Andalusí residence carried out at Calle Zarandona, revealed an empty space south of the house, which was separated from the courtyard simply by a wall. Finally, excavations on Calle Trapería, some thirty metres from the old courtyard of the Great Mosque, revealed an unbuilt space which did not disappear until the second half of the twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth, when a small palace was constructed on the site. The Arabic texts confirm that during the governorship of the Almoravid ‘Alī ibn Yūsuf (1106–1143) certain unbuilt sites were appropriated in order to expand the Great Mosque.³⁴

Other examples of this process of urban densification are documented archaeologically or in the written sources: the city of Málaga and the village of Jolopos are examples of the former, while Fez is a well-known example of the latter.³⁵ The same phenomenon is also documented in newly-formed Arab urban centres and those which developed over the last century, which have been the subjects of ethnoarchaeological studies.³⁶

2.3. *Building over former artisanal installations*

Certain types of artisanal establishments, namely private businesses which lacked the inherent stability of pious foundations, were easily displaced to the periphery to comply with the demand for construction space within the medina. Such expansion is reflected in the written sources, as Ibn ‘Abdūn’s *ḥisba* treatise indicates: “tiles and bricks must be

³³ Pedro Jiménez Castillo and Julio Navarro Palazón, *Platería 14. Sobre cuatro casas andalusíes y su evolución (siglos X–XIII)* (Murcia: Ayuntamiento de Murcia, 1997), pp. 40–41.

³⁴ Alfonso Carmona González, “La expropiación forzosa por ampliación de mezquita en tres fetuas medievales”, in *L’urbanisme dans l’Occident musulman au Moyen Âge. Aspects juridiques*, ed. Patrice Cressier et al. (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2000), pp. 141–151.

³⁵ Ibn Abī Zār’, *Rawd al-Qirās*, translated by Ambrosio Huici Miranda (Valencia: Textos Medievales, 1964), pp. 58–95.

³⁶ See Biewers, “Occupation de l’espace”; Aurenche, “Pour une éthnoarchéologie” (details given in n. 4).

manufactured outside the gates of the city, and the pottery workshops must establish themselves along the ditch which surrounds it, where there is more spacious terrain, for in the city free space is scarce".³⁷ From this text, referring to Seville at the start of the twelfth century, we can deduce that the medina, by that period, had consumed most of the space available for construction within the walls, which until then had been used for intramural artisanal installations.³⁸

While it is likely that the intramural potteries excavated in Murcia were originally founded outside an older enclosure and later brought into the city by the construction of new walls, archaeological evidence suggests that firm conclusions should be viewed with caution.³⁹ For instance, excavations at a site on Calle San Nicolás in Murcia revealed a pottery workshop which, in the second half of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century, was replaced by a large house which subsequently became a cemetery. The same process occurred in another workshop at Calle Cortés, also in Murcia (Fig. 5). It seems that, in the eleventh century, the potteries of the city's formative period were expelled outside the medina because of expansion. They were subsequently transferred to the suburb of Arrixaca, from which they were eventually removed (at least, the sites closest to the wall of the medina), due to the pressure of urban growth in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Similarly, in Pechina (Almería) archaeologists have documented a zone initially dedicated to the pottery industry, which was subsequently transferred to the eastern outskirts of the town. The transfer of the industry left a space into which housing was constructed during a period of urban expansion.⁴⁰ Excavations in Valencia also indicate that settlements were constructed within the ruins of older artisanal areas. Curiously, archaeologists have interpreted this as a periurban phenomenon, only brought within the city walls at the time of their construction around the eleventh century. However, such an interpretation requires the existence of an earlier wall of reduced circumference, and there is a complete lack of material evidence to support such a

³⁷ Emilio García Gómez and Évariste Lévi-Provençal, *Sevilla a comienzos del siglo XII. El tratado de hisba de Ibn Abdun* (Madrid: Moneda y Crédito, 1948), p. 113.

³⁸ The study of the placement of tanneries throughout the medieval period is of great interest, since along with potteries, they serve as the most sensible indicators of the urban growth process, due to their usual location on the outskirts of the town.

³⁹ Navarro, "El cementerio islámico de San Nicolás".

⁴⁰ Manuel Ación Almansa et al., "Excavación de un barrio artesanal de Bayyana (Pechina, Almería)", *Archéologie Islamique* 1 (1990), pp. 147–168.

theory.⁴¹ Again, this phenomenon is not necessarily unique to the cities of al-Andalus; in fact, the expulsion of the urban tanneries of Aleppo, Tunis and Cairo to the city outskirts during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, analyzed by Raymond, offers a useful parallel to the case of Valencia, despite its chronological and geographical distance from the cities of al-Andalus.⁴²

2.4. *Cemeteries*

Cemeteries are not immune to the pressure of an expanding urban centre, as Ibn ʿAbdūn indicates in his *ḥisba* treatise: “One of the most important duties of the *qādī* is that of demolishing the buildings that crop up within the cemetery”.⁴³ The order to demolish houses is proof of the greater resistance of cemeteries to the pressure to absorb the town, surely due to their religious character and to their status as pious foundations. The archaeological evidence indicates that, in al-Andalus, very few disappeared to make way for other uses before the thirteenth century. Usually cemeteries remained active up to the Christian conquest, the moment at which they were abandoned and subsequently built over. Of the intramural Murcian cemeteries studied to date, all were active until the conquest except for two, recently discovered and excavated, on Calle Pascual and Calle San Pedro, at the corner of Calle Desamparados (Fig. 5). The first was built over with shops, while the second was divided for houses. A third example located at Polo de Medina was partially invaded by the private bath of an adjoining house.

3. SATURATION

This phase is characterized by a series of changes in the urban landscape that affect both private and public spaces equally: the former suffer an accelerated process of subdivision, resulting in a reduction

⁴¹ Miquel Rosselló Mesquida, “Evolució i transformació de l’espai urbà des de l’època emiral fins l’època taifa: Les excavacions del c/ Comte Trènor, 12 (València)”, in *Actes del I Congrés d’Estudis de l’Horta Nord* (València: Centre d’Estudis de l’Horta Nord, 1999), pp. 57–87.

⁴² Raymond, “Le déplacement des tanneries”.

⁴³ García Gómez and Lévi-Provençal, *Sevilla a comienzos del siglo XII*, pp. 95 and 148.

of the surface area of the built plots. The buildings erected on these plots now rise vertically, by adding rooms to the upper floors (*al-ghurfa*), rooms in the upper storey and with independent access (*al-masriyya*), or projecting rooms over the street (*sābāṭ*). In addition, the progressive shortage of available space to build within the medina's walls also put pressure on the public areas (streets, squares, etc.), reducing their width or making them disappear completely.

3.1. *Partitioning of houses*

When the urban fabric has expanded and become dense enough to fill its empty spaces, the ultimate result of growth without extramural expansion is the partitioning of existing houses in order to create new ones.⁴⁴ The partition of old properties created the need to open new streets on private plots (*al-darb* or blind alley with or without a door), which give access to new dwellings located in the interior area of the blocks (Fig. 9). Exceptions to this principle exist, arising from processes of inheritance and division which have nothing to do with space shortages, and for which there is no accompanying increase in the height of the new houses. The availability of buildable surface area around existing housing sometimes enables the construction of new rooms which cluster around the old, compensating for lost surface area by creating new spaces through the process of subdivision. The phenomenon of division, part of the third phase (saturation), is also present in the proposed second phase (expansion). For example, in Siyāsa, houses ten, twelve and fourteen originally formed part of a large residence (Fig. 8); houses nine and eighteen were also the result of partitioning an even larger pre-existing residence.

Likewise, in Murcia, spacious residences, originally encompassing two or more courtyards, were subsequently transformed into individual residences.⁴⁵ Scholars have interpreted this transformation as symptomatic of the breakdown of a social system based on the extended family,

⁴⁴ Javier García-Bellido, "Morfogénesis de la ciudad islámica: algunas cuestiones abiertas y ciertas propuestas explicativas", in *L'urbanisme dans l'Occident musulman*, pp. 243–283.

⁴⁵ Pedro Jiménez Castillo and Julio Navarro Palazón, "Murcia omeya", in *El Esplendor de los Omeyas Cordobeses. La Civilización Musulmana de Europa Occidental*, ed. María Jesús Viguera Molins and Concepción Castillo (Granada: El Legado Andalusi, 2001), pp. 132–151.

but this position is difficult to sustain with the available evidence.⁴⁶ Numerous examples of this process of subdivision exist, not only in Murcia but also in Pechina, Málaga, Balaguer and Mértola.⁴⁷ Most recently, we analyzed a large house from the caliphal period, located on Calle Organistas in Murcia, which clearly illustrates the same phenomenon (Fig. 9). The residence consisted of a principal nucleus surrounding a courtyard of considerable dimensions, onto which opened a hall on each of its north and south sides; a small courtyard connected to the entrance hall, the latrine, and other dependencies, and service areas were situated outside the courtyard's southern hall. In the twelfth century, the residence was subdivided around its two courtyards. In order to approximate the extension of its adjacent plot, the former hall was incorporated into the southern property, creating a second house with characteristics similar to the original, but opening in the opposite direction.

3.2. *Growth in height*

An increase in the height of houses usually accompanies the process of urban saturation. Consequently, the portico-gallery comes to play an increasingly important role in this new type of vertical expansion.⁴⁸ In Murcia, archaeologists have managed to document all the construction phases of excavated Andalusi buildings, providing a means of analyzing the frequency with which houses were developed through the addition of one or more stories. The archaeological data is most eloquent with respect to the late appearance of the portico-gallery, which provided access to upper rooms. In the oldest levels, this type of architectural solution was not as frequent as it came to be in Murcia during the second half of the twelfth or the first half of the thirteenth century. For example, house A of Calle Platería 14, constructed in the Almoravid

⁴⁶ Mariano Bernabé Guillamón and José D. López Martínez, *El Palacio Islámico de la calle Fuensanta. Murcia* (Murcia: Museo de Murcia, 1993), pp. 62–63.

⁴⁷ In Murcia, for example, the so called “palace” on Calle Fuensanta, for which see Bernabé and López, *El Palacio Islámico*; house number fourteen on the Calle Platería, for which see Jiménez and Navarro, *Platería 14*, pp. 33–39; the Garaje Villar site, for which see José Manzano Martínez, “Trabajos arqueológicos en el subsuelo de la Plaza de Europa (antiguo Garaje Villar). Ciudad de Murcia”, *Memorias de Arqueología* 3 (1995), pp. 354–397.

⁴⁸ Julio Navarro Palazón and Pedro Jiménez Castillo, “Plantas altas en edificios andalusíes: la aportación de la Arqueología”, *Arqueología Medieval. Actas del coloquio “Formas de habitar e alimentação na Idade Média”* 4 (1996), pp. 107–137.



Fig. 8. Abandoned site of Siyāsa (modern Cieza, prov. Murcia, twelfth-thirteenth centuries), showing the excavated zone. The cores of houses which originally formed large residences and were subdivided much later have been highlighted (Houses 9, 18 and 10; 12 and 14).

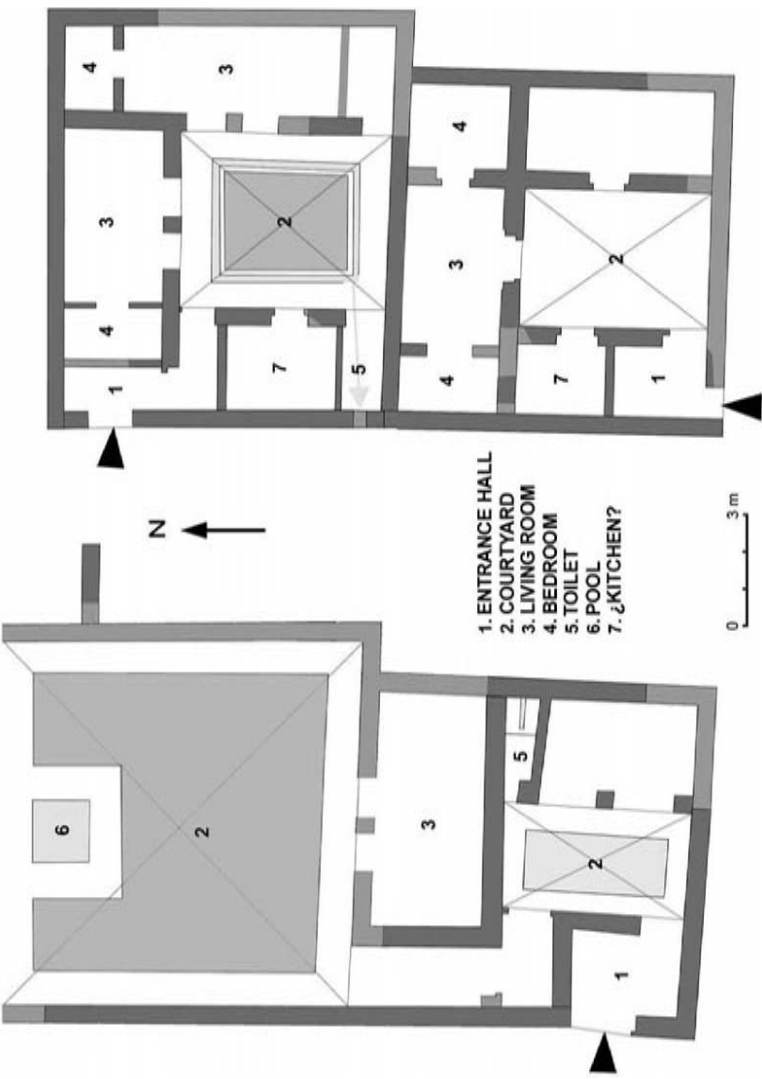


Fig. 9. Excavation of a site in Murcia. In Phase 1 (tenth century), on the left, there is a single house composed of at least two courtyards: the principle one was to the north, while the service court and entrance from the exterior were to the south. In Phase 2 (twelfth century), on the right, the estate was divided into two separate houses.

period, did not include a portico until the beginning of the thirteenth century, coinciding in date with the five-bay portico of the large house identified as Space Four in Garaje Villar.⁴⁹

Lézine, in his study of the medinas of Ifrīqiyya, also believed that the construction of upper stories was a relatively late phenomenon, pointing to the testimony of the twelfth-century Valencian traveller, Ibn Jubayr, as proof. Ibn Jubayr was amazed to find that the majority of the houses in Damascus were three stories in height, for which reason, he wrote, they were able to accommodate three times the number of inhabitants as any other city.⁵⁰ By the first half of the thirteenth century, upper stories were also widespread in al-Andalus, as excavations of houses, most of which had portico-galleries, at the abandoned city of Siyāsa demonstrate. In some cases, it can be shown that these were adopted at a later date: for example, house one appears to have been annexed to the older western façade of its courtyard (Fig. 8).

3.3. *Suppression or reduction of streets*

The pressure of the saturated urban centre is also evident in the public streets, which at this stage are narrowed, and in certain cases disappear as they are invaded by adjoining houses. This is a common process in traditional Islamic urbanism, resulting partly from a legal system which did not penalize the invasion of collective space in cases where there was no substantial detriment to the common good. There are abundant archaeological examples of these partial invasions by new constructions.

The first example, excavated on Calle Victorio in Murcia, consists of a regularly planned early Andalusí road measuring 2.6 metres in width. At a later phase (twelfth or thirteenth century), an adjoining building was constructed into the roadway, which lost half a metre of its width as a result. Excavations revealed a similar reduction in the width of a two and a half metre-wide alley excavated within what was once a large residence in Puxmarina (Fig. 10). One of the most important thoroughfares of Siyāsa, the road delimited by houses six and seven, likewise lost two metres to house number six, which took over some thirty centimetres of the public way (Fig. 8). In extreme cases, the street eventually disappeared completely, as has been documented

⁴⁹ Jiménez and Navarro, *Platería 14*, pp. 30–31; Manzano, “Trabajos arqueológicos”.

⁵⁰ Lézine, *Deux villes*, pp. 30–31.

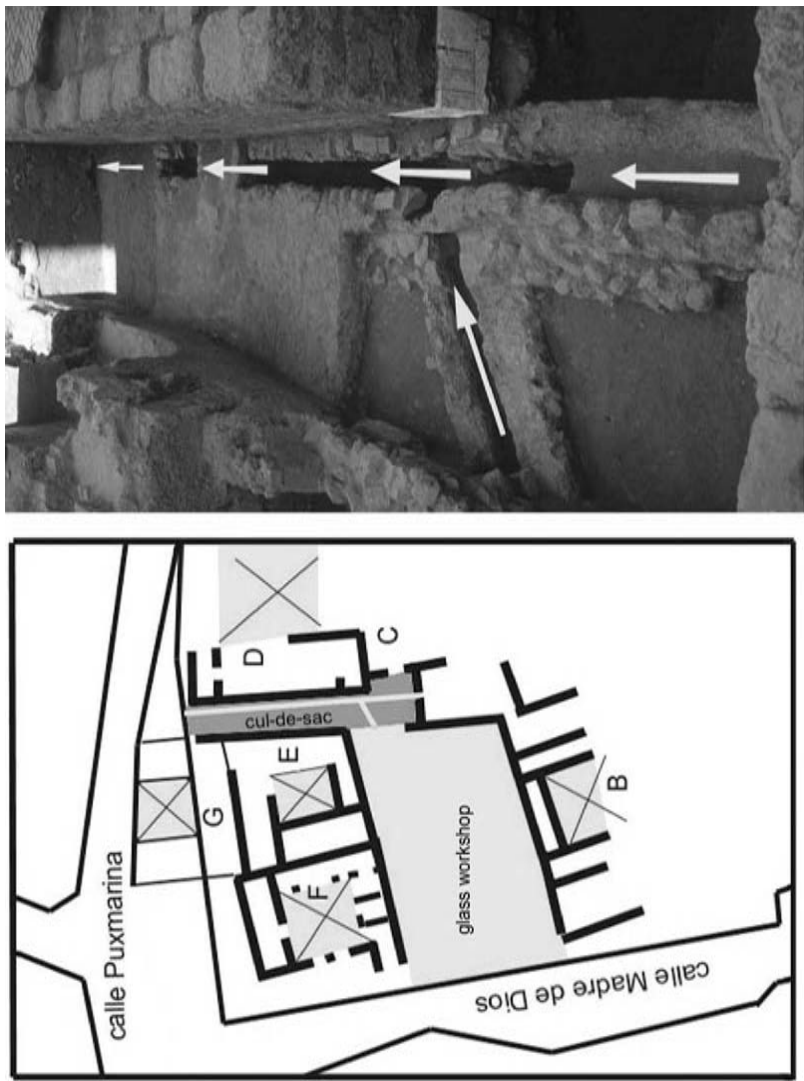


Fig. 10. Dead-end alley excavated in Murcia. Note that the position of the drain is off-centre, as a result of the partial invasion of the street by House D. The original outline was determined by Façade C and, for a short time, the drain originally ran down the centre of the alley, as is usually the case.

in the abandoned Toledan city of Vascos.⁵¹ Finally, the invasion of the airspace of streets and alleys through balconies and connecting passageways between facing buildings is perhaps one of the most characteristic features of the saturated phase.

4. OVERFLOW

Overflow occurs when the urban centre begins to expand outside the city walls to form quarters, continuing the process which previously expelled the potteries, brickworks, tanneries, and other establishments which require a lot of space from the urban centre. The overflow phase is characterized by the presence within the new quarters of residences and other elements formerly associated with the medina proper, such as baths, markets, and neighbourhood mosques as well as congregational mosques in later periods. This overflow phenomenon, which begins along the principal roads, reached its greatest extent when the quarter was walled; at that point, the quarter had developed beyond its first stage, and initiates the same cycle that we have analyzed in the original medina: expansion, saturation, and overflow. Tenth-century Córdoba, which developed into one of the greatest cities of its time as the capital of the Umayyad state, is a relatively early example of the saturated city, while Granada is one of the best examples of the city at the overflow phase. Its particular history allowed it to continue its development until 1492, two and a half centuries after the conquest of other important urban centres of al-Andalus, like Seville, Valencia and Murcia. Nevertheless, all of these centres had evolved into overflow cities when the Castilian and Aragonese armies conquered them in the thirteenth century.

According to al-Idrīsī, in the second half of the twelfth century, Murcia possessed a walled quarter, indicating that its medina had reached the final stage of the evolutionary scheme which has been outlined here. Archaeological evidence indicates that the quarter's earth defenses were not constructed to protect the pottery workshops, cemeteries and dispersed estates (*munyas*), since one of the walls enclosed clearly urban elements like residential quarters, baths, mosques, markets, etc. Ample

⁵¹ Ricardo Izquierdo Benito, *Ciudades hispanomusulmanas "Vascos". Navalmoralejo (Toledo). Campañas 1983–1988* (Toledo: Junta de Comunidades de Castilla-La Mancha, 1994), p. 24.

unbuilt spaces of an agricultural character also extended into the zones closest to its exterior wall, with the exception of the sectors near the principal roads, Cadenas and San Antolín, which in turn developed into a compact walled centre. The green spaces, no doubt reserved for future urban expansion, would have been built up over time, but the Castilian conquest, and the consequent demographic crisis, halted the dynamic expansion of the city.

In any case, this extensive quarter was not a uniform entity in the Islamic period: all evidence indicates that the quarter's western half was occupied by a dense urban centre, while the eastern side was home to a dispersed population, characterized by broad garden zones and orchards located between those of the Alcázar Menor and other aristocratic estates. However, excavations conducted in the western half of the quarter suggest the existence of an urban landscape which had become much more saturated during the second half of the twelfth century. At this point the houses were densely packed, with no empty spaces between them. In fact, at two sites situated near Calle San Antolín, in the western sector, it is possible to detect the existence of potters' workshops which were subdivided and replaced by houses; in other words, the phenomenon of the expulsion of the pottery workshops to the periphery, which previously occurred in the context of the medina, finally repeats itself in the quarter when it, in turn, becomes saturated.

RE-EXAMINING ALMOHAD ECONOMIES IN
SOUTH-WESTERN AL-ANDALUS THROUGH
PETROLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF
ARCHAEOLOGICAL CERAMICS¹

Rebecca Bridgman

The most important change in the economy of al-Andalus during the Almohad caliphate was the shift in focus of trade and exchange, from the Mediterranean to the Straits of Gibraltar and the Atlantic seaboard.² While textual sources remain our primary source of information on the economy of this region, ceramic studies have great potential to supplement such evidence.³ Large quantities of ceramic sherds have been discovered at archaeological sites in al-Andalus, a proportion of which were undoubtedly traded items. However, much of the information on the exchange of ceramics, particularly undecorated common-ware forms, remains unexplored, since past studies have been limited. This article introduces the preliminary findings of an innovative approach to the study of Almohad pottery in south-western al-Andalus. The study encompassed a programme of petrological testing of archaeological

¹ This study is part of a project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, with additional funding for field work provided by the Barakat Trust and the Archaeology division of the University of Southampton. Work would not have been possible without the enthusiasm, guidance and kind co-operation of colleagues in Spain and Portugal, several of whom provided ceramic samples for this project. I am indebted to Dr. Fernando de Amores Carredano, Prof. Magdalena Valor Piechotta, Dr. Sergio García-Dils de la Vega and Dr. Miguel Ángel Tabales Rodríguez of Seville University; and Dr. Fernando Fernández and Diego Oliva Alonso of the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla. My thanks are also due to a group of professional archaeologists who work in Seville: Pilar Lafuente Ibáñez, Rosario Huarte Cambra, Pina López Torres, Dr. Manuel Vera Reina and José Manuel Rodríguez Hidalgo. I am most grateful to Dr. Susana Gómez Martínez of the Campo Arqueológico de Mértola and to Dr. Antonio Fernández Ugalde of the Museo Histórico Municipal de Écija. Finally, I thank my supervisor, Professor Simon Keay, and advisors, Dr. David Williams and Prof. David Peacock of Southampton University, for their advice and guidance throughout. All errors of course remain my own.

² Christophe Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman. De la Conquête Arabe à l'Époque Almohade. Navigation et Mise en Valeur des Côtes d'al-Andalus et du Maghrib Occidental (Portugal-Espagne-Maroc)* (Paris: Éditions Maisonneuve & Larose/Éditions UNESCO, 1997), p. 120.

³ Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman*, pp. 444–445.

ceramics from a range of settlements in the region. Preliminary results, presented here through three case studies, indicate the movement of both decorated and plain common-ware ceramics in south-western al-Andalus.

A host of primary texts documents the key role al-Andalus played in trading networks in Europe, Africa, Arabia, and beyond. Historians suggest that the main reason for this level of trade was a regional specialisation in the production of goods.⁴ During the regimes of both the Almoravids and Almohads, political unification of al-Andalus with the Berber tribes of North Africa resulted in an increased level of trade between these regions, which was focused on the Atlantic Ocean. The reason for this trade was Christian domination of the Mediterranean and conquest of territory in al-Andalus.⁵ At this time, the ports of south-western al-Andalus which provided access to the Atlantic world became increasingly important, and the settlements linked to the Atlantic Ocean developed a solid base of production and exchange. Port cities such as Seville and Mértola, both located on navigable rivers in south-western al-Andalus, flourished in the wake of this increased economic activity.⁶ Cities located inland, such as Écija, may have been the recipients of commodities generated by this economic activity, via a network of terrestrial trade routes.⁷

The growing number of urban archaeological excavations during the past twenty years, which have taken place in the face of modern development, have increased our knowledge of these settlements.⁸ These excavations have enhanced our understanding of urban economies, and the ceramic evidence has proved particularly important, because of its long-term survival in buried conditions, as compared with more per-

⁴ See, for example, Pedro Chalmeta, *El Señor del Zóco en España: Edades Media y Moderna, Contribución al Estudio de la Historia del Mercado* (Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura, 1973), p. 17.

⁵ Olivia Remie Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 69.

⁶ Constable, *Trade and Traders*, p. 120.

⁷ For information on terrestrial routes see, for example, al-Idrīsī, *Los Caminos de Al-Andalus en el siglo XII: según "Uns al-Muḥaṣṣ wa-ra'awd al-Furaṣ"* (*Solaz de Corazones y Prados de Contemplación*), translated by Jassin Abid Mizal (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto de Filología, 1989).

⁸ For the most recent work on how rescue excavations in Seville have increased our understanding of the city, see Magdalena Valor Piechotta and Miguel Ángel Tabales Rodríguez, "La estructura y evolución del caso histórico de Sevilla en época andalusí: Sevilla de *medina* a *ḥaḍirah*", paper presented at the conference entitled "La Ciudad en el Occidente Islámico Medieval", University of Granada, 2004.

ishable goods.⁹ The ceramic evidence from Seville, Mértola, and Écija provides a means with which to assess the level of trade and exchange between them, as well as with other towns or cities in south-western al-Andalus, and further afield.

Ceramic vessels were used both as containers and as traded objects in their own right; they can, therefore, indicate the movement of a range of commodities via trade and exchange networks. Ceramics are relatively low-status and low-value items,¹⁰ and as such they complement the evidence of trade in luxury goods, which are more often cited in historical texts.¹¹ However, we should not forget that ceramics can be transported as a result of factors other than trade and exchange: for example, a vessel may have been taken from one place to another as a prized personal possession, or because it was a gift. Nevertheless, most common ceramic forms analysed here were found in bulk, and it is therefore assumed that the movement of this material resulted predominantly from patterns of trade and exchange.

To use ceramic vessels as evidence of trade and exchange, it is necessary to be able to distinguish between material that was made in close proximity to the site of consumption or use (henceforth 'local' production), and that which was produced at some distance from that site (henceforth 'non-local' production). In order to distinguish local from non-local pottery, the ceramic production of settlements must be characterized. Once this distinction has been made, it is then possible not only to identify any non-local or imported ceramics present in excavated assemblages, but also to assess the distribution of pottery produced at any given settlement. Traditionally, the characterization of ceramic vessels produced in al-Andalus has been conducted on the basis of vessel form and surface decoration. In contexts datable to the eighth and ninth centuries, such methodologies are effective because of the wide regional variation of vessel forms.¹²

⁹ Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman*, p. 377.

¹⁰ For an assessment of the value of imported pottery, see Duncan Brown, "The Social Significance of Imported Medieval Pottery", in *Not So Much a Pot, More a Way of Life*, ed. Chris G. Cumberpatch and Paul W. Blinkhorn (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997), pp. 95–112.

¹¹ Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman*, p. 422.

¹² Some of the most important work on pottery of seventh- to ninth-century date has been carried out by Sonia Gutiérrez Lloret; see, for example, "Production and trade of local and regional pottery in early medieval Spain (7th–9th century): the

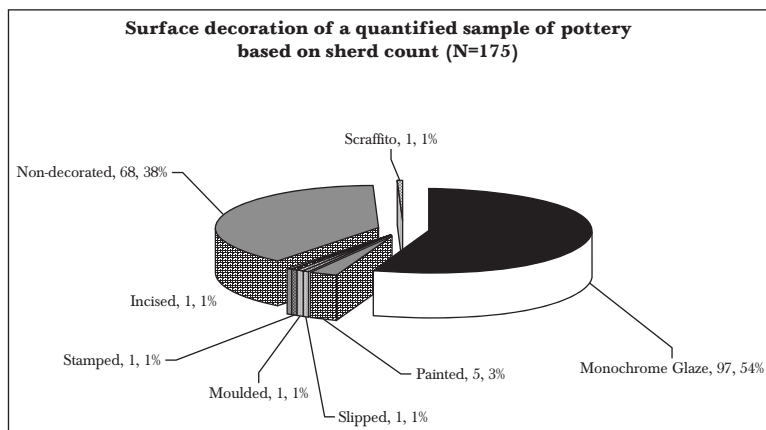


Fig. 1. Pie chart illustrating the surface treatment of an assemblage of pottery from the Alcázar, Seville.

However, by the Almohad period, characterizing pottery through an examination of vessel form or surface decoration is more problematic, because ceramic production came to be largely standardized, particularly in south-western al-Andalus.¹³ This means that, by and large, only unusual decorative types, such as *cuerda seca*,¹⁴ or manganese *scraffito*,¹⁵ can be identified as imports from specialist production centres. However, the vast majority of ceramics recovered from excavated occupation sites, even those from high-status sites such as the Alcázar in Seville, are plain, standardized forms (Fig. 1). This suggests that most of the ceramics purchased, used and subsequently discarded by the urban populace in south-western al-Andalus during the Almohad period,

experience of the south-east of the Iberian Peninsula”, *Boletín de Arqueología Medieval* 6 (1992), pp. 9–22.

¹³ Pilar Lafuente Ibáñez has carried out important work on the typology of ceramic vessels from the Almohad period found in south-western al-Andalus; see in particular, “Cerámica islámica en el área sur occidental de Andalucía: estado de cuestión”, in *Arqueología en el Entorno del Bajo Guadiana: Actas del Encuentro Internacional del Arqueología del Suroeste*, ed. Juan M. Campos, J. Aurelio Pérez and Francisco Gómez (Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 1994), pp. 565–583.

¹⁴ For a description of the decorative technique of *cuerda seca* and most recent analyses, see Remy Chapoulie et al., “*Cuerda seca* ceramics from al-Andalus, Islamic Spain and Portugal (10th–12th centuries A.D.): Investigation with SEM-EDX and cathodoluminescence”, *Archaeometry* 47.3 (2005), pp. 519–534.

¹⁵ For a thorough description of this technique, see Julio Navarro Palazón, “Hacia una sistematización de la cerámica esgrafiada”, in *II Coloquio Cerámica del Mediterráneo Occidental* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1986), pp. 165–178.

were almost certainly plain, with little decoration, except perhaps for a monochrome glaze.¹⁶

Production sources of excavated Almohad ceramics are rarely identified through characterization based on vessel shape or decoration. This has led to a lack of understanding of pottery production in south-western al-Andalus during this period,¹⁷ despite the discovery of numerous kiln sites with associated waste products.¹⁸ Scientific analysis, particularly of vessel fabric or paste, is the obvious solution to the problem of how to characterize plain, standardized vessel forms. While this study is by no means the first project to use scientific analysis to characterize ceramic production in al-Andalus,¹⁹ only limited work has been conducted on Almohad pottery from the south-west of this region. In particular, scientific studies of ceramics have rarely, until now, been used to explore the area of the River Guadalquivir and tributaries, despite the potential of this material for understanding exchange mechanisms in this pivotal economic region.

Seville, the Almohad capital of al-Andalus, forms the focal point of this study, with most samples taken from both production sites and a series of occupation contexts. This range of sites was selected not only

¹⁶ Guillermo Roselló Bordoy has published typologies which illustrate vessel forms and decorative types cited here, see for example, *Ensayo de Sistematización de la Cerámica Árabe en Mallorca* (Palma de Mallorca: Instituto de Estudios Baleáricos, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1978). Also see, "The Ceramics of al-Andalus", in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, ed. Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), pp. 97–103.

¹⁷ For the most recent overview of medieval pottery production in the south-west of al-Andalus, with a useful summary in English, see Alfonso Pleguezuelo and M. Pilar Lafuente, "Cerámicas de Andalucía occidental (1200–1600)", in *Spanish Medieval Ceramics in Spain and the British Isles*, eds. Chris M. Gerrard, Alejandra Gutiérrez and Alan G. Vince, International Series 610 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1995), pp. 217–245.

¹⁸ For example, Fernando de Amores Carredano, "Las alfarerías almohades de la Cartuja", in *El Último Siglo de la Sevilla Islámica (1147–1248)*, ed. Magdalena Valor Piechotta (Seville: University of Seville and Gerencia Municipal de Urbanismo del Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, 1995), pp. 303–306; and Isabel Flores Escobosa, María del Mar Muñoz Martín and Jorge Lirola Delgado, "Las producciones de un alfar islámico en Almería", *Arqueología y Territorio Medieval* 6 (1999), pp. 208–239.

¹⁹ Scientific analysis of medieval pottery in Spain has most recently and frequently been employed by teams of researchers at Zaragoza and Barcelona universities; see, for example, Judit T. Molera et al., "La tecnología de la cerámica islámica y mudéjar", *Caesaraugusta* 73 (1997), pp. 15–41. Juan Zozaya and Alfredo Aparicio Yagüe have recently carried out the particularly useful analysis of ceramics from Mértola and the region of Almería, see "Análisis de cerámicas andalusíes", in *Actes de VII Congrès International sur la Céramique Médiévale en Méditerranée, Thessaloniki, 11–16 Octobre 1999* (Athens: Ministère de la Culture, Caisse des Recettes Archéologiques, 2003), pp. 341–350.

to characterize production, but also to identify any non-local pottery amongst assemblages used by the urban populace. Samples were also tested from a series of other urban settlements in south-western al-Andalus, in an attempt to identify the distribution of ceramic goods originating from Seville and to define the clays used in local pottery production at those settlements. This article discusses ceramics from Seville and two other settlements, Écija and Mértola (for their locations, see Fig. 2).

The technique of ceramic petrology, employed here to analyse the selected pottery samples, uses geological criteria to characterize ceramic vessels whose clay fabrics may appear identical to the naked eye. Ceramic petrology was pioneered in the 1960s by Prof. David Peacock,²⁰ and today is frequently employed in identifying the distribution or provenance of ceramic vessels.²¹ This technique involves examining at a microscopic level the geological inclusions contained within the clay body (commonly referred to as fabric) of these vessels.²² As the geology of each region varies, so the inclusions within the clay will differ, allowing the characterization of ceramic production based on observed geological content. Rather than limiting analysis to one or two types of decorated pottery, as has been done in the past, this study utilizes petrology to test the whole range of ceramic types commonly recovered from excavated Almohad contexts in south-western al-Andalus.²³

²⁰ For the most useful summary of Peacock's early work see, David P. S. Peacock, "The scientific analysis of ancient ceramics: a review", *World Archaeology* 1 (1970), pp. 375–389.

²¹ For a summary of petrology and other techniques used to analyse the production and distribution of ceramics, see Michael S. Tite, "Pottery production, distribution and consumption: the contribution of the physical sciences", *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 6 (1999), pp. 181–233.

²² Peacock, "Scientific analysis", p. 379.

²³ While this technique can be problematic in analysing clays from river valleys, due to the perceived homogeneity of their geological deposits, my results nevertheless indicate the success of petrological analysis in characterizing ceramic production in the Guadalquivir valley and beyond. For a general critique of the technique of ceramic petrology, see Sander van der Leeuw, "Exchange and trade in ceramics: some notes from the potter's point of view", in *The Complex Past of Pottery. Production, Circulation and Consumption of Mycenaean and Greek Pottery (sixteenth to early fifth centuries B.C.)*, ed. Jan Paul Crielaard, Vladimir Stissi and Gert Jan van Wijngaarden (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1999), p. 120.

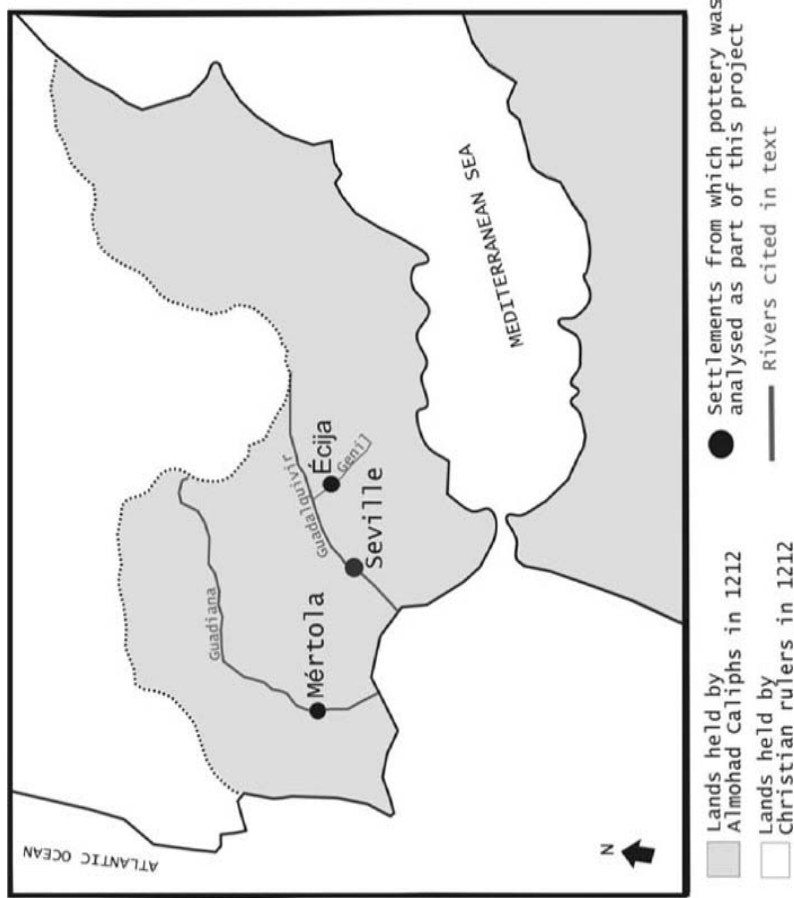


Fig. 2. Map of southwestern al-Andalus during the Almohad period, showing the locations of the sites which supplied pottery samples for this study.

SEVILLE

Seville was the principal medina of the administrative district or *kūra* of Ishbiliyya.²⁴ Under the Almohads the city attained unprecedented importance as the new capital of al-Andalus.²⁵ These rulers ordered a series of building works in the city, ranging from modernizing the souk to the construction of a new and enlarged city wall, to the building of bridges, including a pontoon bridge over the River Guadalquivir.²⁶ The Almohad population of Seville has been estimated at 70,000 people,²⁷ and the economy of the city probably relied on its role as a port capable of accommodating deep-draught vessels.²⁸ Arab geographers frequently cite the large-scale navigation of the Guadalquivir, and indicate the importance of river traffic downstream of Seville, and between Seville and Córdoba.²⁹

Artefacts recovered from archaeological excavations provide information on the commodities imported into Seville from other settlements. For example, limited quantities of manganese *scraffito* vessels produced in the east of al-Andalus,³⁰ and in North Africa,³¹ have been recovered at sites in western al-Andalus, including Seville, indicating that this ware was commercially traded. The ceramic evidence complements historical sources to provide information on some of Seville's most important

²⁴ For information on the administrative division of al-Andalus, with specific reference to Seville, see Magdalena Valor Picchotta and José Ramírez del Río, "La división geográfico-administrativa de al-Andalus", in *El Esplendor de los Omeyyas Cordobeses: La civilización musulmana de Europa Occidental*, ed. María Jesús Viguera Molins and Concepción Castillo (Granada: El Legado Andalusi, 2001), pp. 269–270.

²⁵ For a general introduction to Almohad Seville, see María Jesús Viguera Molins, "Los Almohades en Sevilla: 1147–1248", in *Sevilla Almohade*, ed. Magdalena Valor Picchotta and Ahmed Tahiri (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, Junta de Andalucía, 1999), pp. 19–23.

²⁶ Magdalena Valor Picchotta, "De Hispalis a Isbiliya", in *Edades de Sevilla: Hispalis, Isbiliya, Sevilla*, ed. Magdalena Valor Picchotta (Seville: Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, 2002), pp. 45–47.

²⁷ Pierre Guichard, "The social history of Muslim Spain", in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi, vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 1992), p. 700.

²⁸ Magdalena Valor Picchotta, "The city port", in Valor Picchotta and Tahiri, *Sevilla Almohade*, pp. 286–287.

²⁹ Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman*, p. 380.

³⁰ Rosario Huarte Cambra and Pilar Lafuente Ibáñez, "La cerámica de las excavaciones de la catedral", in *Magna Hispalensis I: Recuperación de la Aljama Almohade*, ed. Alfonso Jiménez Martín (Seville: Aula Hernán Ruiz, Cabildo Metropolitano, 2002), p. 417.

³¹ Susana Gómez Martínez, "Producciones cerámicas en la Mértola islámica", in *Actes de VII Congrès International sur la Céramique Médiévale en Méditerranée* (Athens: Ministère de la Culture, Caisse des Recettes Archéologiques, 2003), p. 655.

exports during the Almohad period. For instance, storage jars (*tinajas*) from Seville, which probably contained olive oil, have been identified in archaeological contexts dating to the thirteenth century, in London and Southampton.³² Historical sources tell us that Seville was particularly famed for its production of olive oil,³³ which was exported within al-Andalus, but also reached Alexandria and possibly as far as Yemen.³⁴ Both historical and archaeological evidence, therefore, highlight the level to which olive oil produced in the Seville region was exported.

It is possible that Seville also produced ceramics which were exported as commodities in their own right. However, the standardization of vessels in south-western al-Andalus during the Almohad period,³⁵ has meant that no other ceramic vessels made in Seville have been firmly identified in locations within the region. In order to further understand the trade and exchange of Seville's ceramic imports and exports, it is was necessary to characterize ceramic production in the city. The analysis of misfired, or waster, pottery taken from La Cartuja, an excavated Almohad pottery production site,³⁶ was central to this process.

One hundred and twenty-seven samples were analysed for this study, of which twenty-two were from La Cartuja, and the remainder largely from four excavated occupation sites in Seville. Vessels from both production and occupation sites were analysed in order to identify the distribution of ceramics made at local production sites, such as La Cartuja, and to assess the quantity of non-local or imported material present. Waster materials in red- and buff-firing clays were noted at La Cartuja, which can be divided into seven broad fabric groups. These groups contain a heterogeneous range of geological inclusions, which characterize production in this area. Naturally-occurring inclusions within these fabrics are frequently rounded or sub-rounded, owing to forces of abrasion as they were washed down from their source in the

³² For a petrological analysis of this and other Spanish pottery recovered from excavations in England, see Alan G. Vince, "Medieval and post-medieval Spanish pottery from the City of London", in *Current Research in Ceramics: Thin-Section Studies. The British Museum Seminar 1980*. Vol. 32 of *British Museum Occasional Papers*, eds. Ian Freestone, Catherine Johns and Tim Potter (London: British Museum Press, 1982), pp. 135–44.

³³ Emilio Molina López, "Economía, prosperidad, impuestos y sectores productivos", in *El Retroceso Territorial de al-Andalus: Almorávides y Almohades, siglos XI al XIII. Historia de España, vol. VII* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, S.A., 1997), p. 286.

³⁴ Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman*, p. 401.

³⁵ Lafuente Ibáñez, "Cerámica islámica", p. 565.

³⁶ De Amores Carredano, "Las alfarerías almohades", p. 305.

Sierra Morena mountain range, located to the north of the city. A further two fabric groups have been identified as the probable production of Seville or sites in the vicinity of the city, based on evidence from a series of clay samples, or the analysis of waster material from the later Mudéjar ceramic production site at Triana.³⁷ (See Tables 1 and 2 for a summary of all Seville fabric groups, and the photomicrographs in Colour Plates 12 and 13.) The number of fabric groups identified indicates the complexity of pottery production at major urban centres such as Seville, and highlights the need for large-scale sampling of material at other cities.

Two fabric groups and nine individual sherds were identified as non-local products amongst assemblages from occupation sites (see Tables 1 and 2). This non-local or imported pottery represented just over 10% of the ceramics used or consumed in the city. To date, it has only been possible to suggest a production source for three of these non-local fabrics, because of the lack of comparative material from the region. Furthermore, this paucity of available comparanda has made it impossible to suggest which regions predominated in trade and exchange with Seville. Nevertheless, the production sites of these non-local fabrics whose provenance is known reinforces assertions in historical sources of contact between Seville and the region of Málaga (see Table 2: Seville Import 3); with the central Islamic lands, possibly Syria (see Table 2: Seville Import 8); and with either Sharq al-Andalus or possibly North Africa (see Table 2: Seville Import 9). These results confirm that, as well as frequent contact with other settlements within al-Andalus and its Atlantic zone, Seville maintained important connections with the central Islamic lands, most probably via Alexandria.³⁸

It is interesting to note that the vessel forms produced in these non-local fabrics are sometimes large in size. In particular, vessels produced in Fabric IIc include a stand (or *reposadero*) with a green glaze and stamped decoration, which was probably used to support a decorated storage jar (or *tinaja estampillada*). This suggests that, in contrast to the general assumption that large ceramic vessels and associated products were not transported or traded,³⁹ there is a case to suggest that this

³⁷ For details of the recent excavations at Triana and a detailed typology of ceramic material recovered from this site, see Manuel Vera Reina and Pina López Torres, *La Cerámica Medieval Sevillana (Siglos XII al XIV): La Producción Trianera*. BAR International Series, no. 1403 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005).

³⁸ Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman*, pp. 397–398, 401.

³⁹ Tite, “Pottery production, distribution and consumption”, p. 200.

was indeed occurring in Almohad al-Andalus. The analysis of surface decoration has recently been used to support the theory that decorated storage jars or *tinajas* were traded objects,⁴⁰ however this is the first scientific confirmation of such processes. The presence of large non-local objects may imply that transport by boat was the easiest and most economical method of moving objects of such proportions. This would make sense in light of Seville's role as a port city, but also suggests the unprecedented strength of maritime culture under the Almohads, in which cities played an active role.⁴¹

The results of these analyses indicate that Seville was largely self-sufficient in the supply of ceramics. This study has facilitated the characterization of ceramic production in Seville, which has in turn enabled the identification of pottery made there amongst ceramic assemblages gathered from other settlements in south-western al-Andalus. The distribution of Seville's ceramic products to settlements close to the city and to those located at a greater distance can be seen in the cases of Écija and Mértola, as the following discussions show.

ÉCIJA

The medieval history of Écija (Ar. Istijja), located on the River Genil (a tributary of the Guadalquivir), is little understood and has until recently been the subject of few detailed studies. This settlement was the principal medina of the surrounding administrative district (*kūra*), though it was comparatively small. Its city wall, constructed by the Almohads, enclosed an area of just 41.7 hectares,⁴² compared with 273 hectares at Seville.⁴³ Recent excavations have indicated that a *qasr* was also constructed in the Almohad period and incorporated into the walled area.⁴⁴ Despite its small size, Écija occupied an important location

⁴⁰ For example, see Julio Navarro Palazón and Pedro Jiménez Castillo, "Religiosidad y creencias en la Murcia musulmana: testimonios arqueológicos de una cultura oriental", in *Huellas. Catedral de Murcia. Exposición 2002, 23 de enero–22 de julio*, ed. Julio Navarro Palazón (Murcia: Caja de Ahorros de Murcia, 2002), p. 67.

⁴¹ Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman*, pp. 129, 170.

⁴² Pedro Sáez Fernández et al., *Écija. I: La Ciudad. Carta Arqueológica Municipal* (Seville: Junta de Andalucía. Consejería de Cultura, 2004), pp. 99–104.

⁴³ Valor Piechotta, "De Hispalis a Isbiliya", p. 46.

⁴⁴ Sergio García-Dils de la Vega et al., "Plaza de Armas de Écija: recuperación de un espacio urbano marginal", paper presented at the II Congreso Internacional sobre Fortificaciones: Conservación y Difusión de Entornos Fortificados, 2004.

Table 1. Ceramic fabric groups identified from Seville.

Fabric group	Summary description and principal inclusions ⁴⁵	Ware types and most common vessel forms ⁴⁶	Production centre
Seville Fabric I	Coarse red-firing iron rich fabric. Quartz, 20–25%; Limestone 2–5%; Plagioclase and alkali feldspar 1–3%; Biotite Mica 1%; Iron rich pellets 5%; Feldspars 2–7%. Heterogeneous collection of rock fragments including Sandstone 1%; Phyllite and Granite <1% Inclusions measure between 0.3–0.9mm in size and are predominantly sub-rounded with sparse sub-angular quartz possibly representing temper added to the clay by the potter. See photomicrograph 1.	Cooking wares e.g. ‘olla’ and table wares e.g. ‘cazuela’ and ‘ataifor’.	Seville—wasters from kilns at La Cartuja.
Seville Fabric II (includes sub-groups a, b).	Coarse buff-firing fabric. Quartz, 10–15%, s–t, 10%; Limestone 3–7%; Plagioclase and alkali feldspar 3–7%; Biotite Mica 3–10%; Iron rich pellets 7–10%. Heterogeneous collection of rock fragments including Granite 1%; Metamorphic; Sedimentary and Volcanic rock <1% (but this later group are not present in all samples). Inclusions measure between 0.4mm–1.2mm in size and are predominantly sub-rounded. See photomicrograph 2.	Storage wares e.g. ‘Tinaja’, ‘jarra’, ‘cántara’.	Seville—wasters from kilns at La Cartuja.
Fabric IIc	Coarse buff-firing fabric appears similar Seville fabric IIa in hand specimen. Quartz 10%; Limestone 5%; Biotite mica 7%; Plagioclase feldspar 1–2%; Granite 5%; Sandstone 1%; Metamorphic rocks inc Phyllite 1%; Volcanic rock fragments <1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure between 0.1mm–1.5mm.	Complementary ware ‘repositoro’. Domestic ware ‘brocal’.	Unknown—imported to Seville.
Seville Fabric III (includes sub-groups a, b, c)	Fine buff-firing fabric; possibly result of refining same clay used to produce Seville Fabric II. Quartz 2–10%; Secondary calcite 5–25%; Limestone 1–2%; Biotite Mica 1%; Plagioclase feldspar 1%; Iron rich pellets 2%; degraded Granite or Sandstone <1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded in shape and measure between 0.2mm–0.5mm. See photomicrograph 3.	Storage and table wares e.g. ‘Jarrita/jarra’.	Seville—wasters from kilns at La Cartuja.
Seville Fabric IV	Coarse vesicular green/buff-firing fabric, originally probably the same as Seville Fabric II or III but altered as a result of continuous re-firing. Quartz 5%; Limestone 1%; Feldspar 5%; Iron rich pellets 3–5%. Inclusions measure between 0.2mm–0.4mm.	Kiln furniture.	La Cartuja—only found at this production site.

Seville Fabric Va	Fine, buff-firing fabric. Quartz 10–15%; Biotite Mica 3–7%; Limestone 1–2%; Plagioclase and alkali feldspar 1%; Iron rich pellets 1–5%. Heterogeneous collection of rock fragments including Granite; Sandstone or Metamorphic rock <1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure between 0.2mm–0.5mm, with rare examples measuring 1.4mm. See photomicrograph 6.	Predominantly table wares e.g. ‘cuenco’ and ‘ataifor’.	Probably Seville—kiln site unknown.
Seville Fabric Vb	Fine buff-firing fabric. Quartz 10–15%; Biotite Mica 2–5%; Limestone 3–10%; Plagioclase and alkali feldspar 1–2%; Secondary calcite predominantly 25–30%; Iron rich pellets 3–7%. Heterogeneous collection of rock fragments including Granite and Sandstone or Metamorphic rock <1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure predominantly between 0.2mm to 0.5mm with rare examples measuring up to 0.9mm.	Predominantly table wares e.g. ‘cuenco’ and ‘ataifor’ but also storage wares e.g. ‘cántarra’ and ‘jarro’.	Probably Seville—kiln site unknown.
Seville Fabric Vc	Fine buff-firing fabric. Quartz 10%; Biotite Mica 2–15%; Limestone 10–20%; Plagioclase and alkali feldspar 1–2%; Secondary calcite 1–5%; Iron rich pellets 3–5%. Heterogeneous collection of rock fragments including Granite Sandstone or Metamorphic rock <1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure predominantly between 0.2–0.5mm with rare examples measuring up to 0.9mm.	Table and storage wares e.g. ‘cuenco’ and ‘jarro’.	Probably in the vicinity of Seville, based on analysis of clay samples from Coria del Río.
Seville Fabric VI (includes sub-groups a, b, c, d)	Coarse red-firing fabric. Quartz 25%; Limestone 3–7%; Iron rich pellets 3–5%; Biotite Mica 2–10%. Heterogeneous collection of rock fragments, including Granite 1–2%; Metamorphic rock 1% and or Sandstone <1%. Inclusions predominantly sub-rounded, measuring between 0.2mm–1.2mm. See photomicrograph 5 for Fabric VIa.	Predominantly cook wares e.g. ‘olla’ and ‘cuenco’ but also fire containers e.g. ‘anafé’.	Probably vicinity of Seville—kiln site unknown.

⁴⁵ The percentage presence of inclusions observed in all fabrics during petrological analysis was calculated using comparative charts in A.J. Mathew, A.J. Woods and C. Oliver, “Spots before the eyes: new comparison charts for visual percentage estimation in archaeological material”, in *Recent Developments in Ceramic Petrology*, eds. Andrew Middleton and Ian Freestone (London: British Museum Publications, 1991), pp. 211–263.

⁴⁶ For guidelines on the categorization of ceramics see Guillermo Roselló Bordoy, *Cerámica Árabe*.

Table 2. Ceramic fabric groups identified from Seville.

Fabric group	Summary description and principal inclusions	Ware types and most common vessel forms	Production centre
Seville Fabric VII	Coarse buff-firing fabric with iron rich inclusions visible to naked eye. Quartz 7–10%; Limestone 1–5%; Biotite Mica predominantly 1–3%; although one variant contains 15%; Plagioclase and alkali feldspars 1–2%; Iron rich inclusions 5–10%. Heterogeneous collection of rock fragments including Granite 1%; Sandstone <1% and Quarzite <1%. Inclusions measure predominantly between 0.2mm–0.8mm, although rare examples are up to 1.5mm in size, all are sub-rounded.	Domestic wares e.g. ‘lebrillo’ and ‘arcaduz’.	Seville—wasters from kilns at La Cartuja.
Seville Fabric VIII	Fine, buff-firing fabric, similar to Seville fabric III. Quartz 10–20%; Limestone, 3–5%; Iron rich pellets 3–5%; Biotite Mica 2–5%; secondary calcite 15–25%; Plagioclase and alkali feldspar 1%. Heterogeneous collection of rock fragments including Granite; Quartz mica schist and volcanic rock 1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure 0.1mm to 0.5mm in size.	Table wares e.g. ‘jarro con pitorro’ and ‘cuenco’. Also storage wares e.g. ‘jarro’ and domestic wares e.g. ‘arcaduz’.	Probably Seville, given similarity with Fabric III. Kiln site unknown.
Fabric IX	Coarse sandy fabric, buff- to orangish-firing. Quartz 15%; Biotite Mica 5%; Limestone 3%; Orthoclase Feldspars 3%; Granite 3%; Iron rich pellets 5–7%; Sandstone <1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and predominantly measure 0.1mm–0.5mm, although rare examples measure up to 2mm.	Domestic ware e.g. ‘lebrillo’ and table ware—‘atafor’.	Unknown—possibly imported into Seville.
Import 1	Coarse red-firing fabric. Quartz 25%; Orthoclase feldspar 3%; white mica 3%; Limestone 1%; Sandstone <1%; Granite <1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure predominantly between 0.1mm–0.4mm, although a rare sandstone inclusion measures 1mm.	Table ware e.g. ‘atafor’.	Unknown—possibly imported into Seville.
Import 2	Coarse red-firing fabric. Quartz 10%; white and brown mica 1–3%; Limestone 2%; Iron rich pellets 3%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and sub-angular and measure between 0.1mm–0.4mm.	Storage ware e.g. ‘orza’.	Unknown—possibly imported into Seville.

Import 3	Coarse red-firing fabric. Quartz 10%; Limestone sparse 7%; Muscovite mica 10%; Iron rich pellets 3%; Metamorphic rock—Schist and Phyllite 2%; Sandstone <1%; Granite <1%. Inclusions are sub-angular and sub-rounded and measure between 0.2mm–1.2mm.	Fire container e.g. ‘candil’.	Possibly locality of Malaga.
Import 4	Coarse buff-firing fabric appears similar to Seville fabric II in hand specimen form. Quartz 7%; Granite 10%; Limestone 1%; Biotite mica 2%; Plagioclase feldspar 2%; Iron rich pellets 2%; Sandstone 1%; Chert 1%; Meta-quartzites 2%. Inclusions are sub-angular and measure between 0.1mm–4mm in size.	Complementary ware e.g. ‘tapadera’.	Unknown—possibly imported into Seville.
Import 5	Coarse buff-firing fabric appears similar to Seville fabric II in hand specimen form. Quartz 7%; Sandstone 5%; Limestone 2%; Orthoclase and Plagioclase feldspar 2%; Metamorphic rock (including Mica Schist and Phyllite) 2%; Granite 2%; Iron rich pellets 3%. Inclusions are predominantly sub-rounded and measure between 0.2mm–2.5mm in size.	Complementary ware e.g. ‘tapadera’.	Unknown—possibly imported into Seville.
Import 6	Fine buff-firing fabric. Quartz 7%; Limestone 1% and Biotite mica 1%; Iron rich pellets 1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure between 0.1–0.2mm.	Complementary ware e.g. ‘tapadera’.	Unknown—possibly imported into Seville.
Import 7	Coarse buff-firing fabric. Quartz 7%; Limestone 7%; Plagioclase and Orthoclase feldspar 2%; Chert 1%; Sandstone (greywacke) 1%; Iron rich pellets 3%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure between 0.2mm–0.5mm in size.	Storage ware e.g. ‘cántara’.	Unknown—possibly imported into Seville.
Import 8	Fine cream sandy fabric known as <i>fritware</i> . Sub-angular to angular quartz 20% measuring up to 0.5mm; sub-rounded calcareous clay pellets 3%, measure up to 2.3mm.	White glazed body fragment with blue under glaze decoration, possibly from an ‘alberello’.	Possibly Syrian.
Import 9, <i>Scruffito</i>	Fine, buff-firing, micaceous fabric. Quartz 10%; Muscovite Mica 15%; Limestone 1%; Iron rich pellets 5%; possible inclusion of Slate 1%; remnant of Shell fragment 1%; Sandstone <1%; Orthoclase feldspar <1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure 0.1mm–0.3mm in size.	Table ware e.g. ‘jarra’ with incised decoration on a manganeze slip.	Likely eastern al-Andalus or possibly Maghreb.

on the road between Córdoba and Seville,⁴⁷ as it guarded a bridge over the River Genil,⁴⁸ which would have been an important point of passage. Furthermore, historical sources indicate that the size of the *kūra* was considerable, with rich agricultural production and important markets.⁴⁹ Mazzoli-Guintard suggests that the presence of a *funduq* at Écija implies its involvement in “medium distance” trade.⁵⁰

Evidence of a ceramic industry in the city is provided by the discovery of several kiln sites and deposits of misfired or waster pottery dating to the medieval period.⁵¹ Again, the recovery of waster ceramics is particularly important, as they enable the characterization of local ceramic production and, in turn, facilitate the separation of ceramics produced in the city, from those imported from other locations. Ten ceramic samples from Écija were analysed: three from a deposit of waster sherds from Calle Alfares, and the remainder from excavated medieval contexts within the *qasr* (see Table 3 for a summary of results, and photomicrograph 4 in Colour Plate 13).

The results have shown that petrological analysis can easily distinguish buff-firing ceramics made in Écija, at sites such as Calle Alfares, from those produced in Seville during the same period. The Écija products contained a distinctively high quantity of calcareous material, either in the form of limestone or secondary calcite, which provides a clear contrast with the fabrics of pottery made in Seville. Ceramic vessels containing these distinctive inclusions were recovered not only from the production site at Calle Alfares, but also from a consumption context, at the *qasr*. However, not all of the Écija pottery analysed displayed this calcareous fabric. Ceramics examined from the *qasr* also included an example of a cookware vessel (or *cazuela*), whose fabric is very similar to the red-firing clays which characterize ceramic production in Seville.

It is not possible to establish the production source of the remaining fabric groups identified from Écija without further analysis of ceramics from the city and its environs. Nevertheless, the preliminary results show that, while the inhabitants of Écija produced their own ceramic wares, they also acquired wares from elsewhere, including Seville. This

⁴⁷ Al-Idrīsī, *Los Caminos de Al-Andalus*, p. 81.

⁴⁸ Christine Mazzoli-Guintard, *Ciudades de al-Andalus. España y Portugal en la Época Musulmana (S.VII–XV)* (Granada: Ediciones ALMED, 2000), p. 72.

⁴⁹ Sáez Fernández, *Écija*, pp. 99, 124.

⁵⁰ Mazzoli-Guintard, *Ciudades de al-Andalus*, pp. 119–120.

⁵¹ Sáez Fernández, *Écija*, pp. 124–125.

Table 3. Ceramic fabric groups identified from Écija.

Fabric group	Summary description and principal inclusions	Ware types and most common vessel forms	Production centre
Écija 1	See Seville Fabric VI. See photomicrograph 5.	Cook ware e.g. 'cazuela'.	Vicinity Seville—kiln site unknown.
Écija 2A	Fine buff-firing fabric. Quartz 5–7%; Limestone 25–30%; Iron rich pellets 3–5%; Sandstone <1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded to rounded and measure predominantly 0.2mm–0.3mm, although rare examples are 0.9mm in size. See photomicrograph 4.	Storage ware e.g. 'jarra'.	Écija—wasters from kiln site in Calle Alfares.
Écija 2B	Fine buff-firing fabric. Quartz sparse 5–7%; Limestone 5–10%; Secondary calcite 15–25%; Iron rich pellets 3%; Sandstone <1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure between 0.2mm–0.3mm, although rare examples are up to 1mm in size.	Storage ware e.g. 'tinaja'. Domestic ware e.g. 'arcaduz'.	Écija—wasters from kiln site in Calle Alfares.
Écija 2C	Fine buff-firing fabric. Quartz 3–5%; Biotite mica 2%; Limestone 2%; Iron rich pellets 5%; Foraminifera 5%; Sandstone <1%; Secondary calcite 25%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure 0.2mm–0.5mm.	Table ware e.g. 'cuenco'.	Unknown—possibly non-local.
Écija 3	Fine buff-firing fabric. Quartz 7%; Limestone 15%; Foraminifera 10%; Sandstone <1%; Iron rich pellets 2%; white and brown mica 1–2%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure 0.1mm–0.3mm, although rare examples are up to 1mm in size.	Storage ware e.g. 'jarra'.	Unknown—possibly non-local.
Écija 4	Coarse buff-firing fabric. Quartz 20%; rare heterogeneous rock fragments including Sandstone; degraded Granite and Phyllite all 1%. Biotite mica 1%; Iron rich pellets <1%. Lacks the limestone associated with products from Seville or those from Calle Alfares (see above). Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure between 0.1mm–0.9mm.	Domestic ware e.g. 'lebrillo'.	Unknown.
Écija 5	Coarse buff-firing fabric. Quartz 10%; heterogeneous rock fragments including Sandstone; Phyllite; Granite all 1%; Biotite mica 2%; Iron rich pellets 5%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure between 0.2mm–2.2mm.	Domestic ware e.g. 'lebrillo'.	Unknown.

analysis indicates the movement of manufactured products between two settlements, located only a relatively short distance from each other, on routes of major traffic, and qualifies Mazzoli-Guintard's suggestion of Écija's involvement in "medium distance" trade. However, we must be cautious of making assumptions about Écija's trade and exchange patterns based on the analysis of only a small number of samples. Nor should we ignore the possibility of her involvement in trade over longer distances, as terrestrial networks of exchange are likely to have operated in conjunction with longer-distance riverine or maritime routes, as witnessed elsewhere.⁵²

MÉRTOLA

Mértola, in present-day Portugal, was a significantly smaller settlement in the Almohad period in comparison with Seville and Écija: its intramural area was just 4.75 hectares.⁵³ Ibn Saʿīd names Mértola as the *ḥiṣn* (fort) of Beja,⁵⁴ and al-Idrīsī says that Mértola had the best fortress in the region.⁵⁵ Soldiers were garrisoned here during the Almohad period,⁵⁶ and it became an important place of refuge for Muslims driven out of their lands by Christian conquests in the Alentejo region.⁵⁷ However, Mértola was more than just a fortified refuge, and by the Almohad period its urban characteristics featured a town wall which enclosed the settlement, a Friday mosque, and *qasr*.⁵⁸ It also functioned as a port, and was renowned for its international trading contacts, thanks to its strategic position at the most northerly navigable point of the River Guadiana.⁵⁹ Mértola acted as a staging post, connecting the commercial activity of the Atlantic Ocean with the land-locked Alentejo region, both through water-borne and terrestrial transport.⁶⁰

⁵² Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman*, p. 378.

⁵³ Mazzoli-Guintard, *Ciudades de al-Andalus*, p. 458.

⁵⁴ Mazzoli-Guintard, *Ciudades de al-Andalus*, p. 360.

⁵⁵ Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman*, p. 385.

⁵⁶ Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman*, p. 129.

⁵⁷ Mazzoli-Guintard, *Ciudades de al-Andalus*, pp. 284–285. The Alentejo is a region in the south-west of present-day Portugal.

⁵⁸ Mazzoli-Guintard calls Mértola a secondary city. For further information on the urban characteristics of this settlement, see her *Ciudades de al-Andalus*, pp. 170, 285.

⁵⁹ Gómez Martínez, "Mértola islámica", p. 653.

⁶⁰ Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman*, p. 385.

Texts indicate that the Alentejo region, which included cities such as Beja and Evora, exported cereals and minerals primarily.⁶¹ While historical evidence provides little information on Mértola's commercial importance, archaeological evidence indicates the presence of a gold or silver workshop, and activity related to textile production, inside the walls of Mértola's fortress.⁶²

Evidence from excavated ceramics further refines the picture of the economy of Mértola and its environs,⁶³ suggesting that Mértola was a producer of both relief- and lustre-wares,⁶⁴ as well as being a staging post rather than final destination for imported ceramic commodities.⁶⁵ The production sources of these non-local commodities, which included manganese *scraffito* and *cuerda seca*, have been debated. Gómez Martínez suggests that both these decorative wares were made in Almería, although later forms of *scraffito* may have been produced in Ceuta.⁶⁶ Her suggestions are largely confirmed by historical evidence and recent excavations in Almería, which indicate that the city underwent a period of economic decline following ten years of Christian control (between 1147 and 1157).⁶⁷ Moreover, Flores Escobosa et al. consider it probable that, after this period, the pottery produced in Almería, including *cuerda seca* and *scraffito*, was no longer exported.⁶⁸

The analysis of ceramics from Mértola was undertaken in an attempt to identify the possible production origin of a range of ceramic types, including *cuerda seca*, from excavated deposits dating to the Almohad period. The principal difference between my analysis and that carried out previously was that a range of vessel forms was tested, and that the fabrics of contemporary ceramic products from Seville were now available for comparison.

Six samples from Mértola were analysed: five of these were taken from ceramic vessels recovered from Almohad occupation contexts within the *qasr*, and the final sherd came from a possible kiln site, located elsewhere in this settlement (see Table 4 for a summary of

⁶¹ Gómez Martínez, "Mértola islámica", p. 657.

⁶² Gómez Martínez, "Mértola islámica", p. 657.

⁶³ Picard, *L'Océan Atlantique Musulman*, p. 378.

⁶⁴ Zozaya and Aparicio Yagüe, "Análisis de cerámicas andalusíes", p. 350.

⁶⁵ Gómez Martínez, "Mértola islámica", p. 657.

⁶⁶ Gómez Martínez, "Mértola islámica", pp. 654–655.

⁶⁷ Flores Escobosa et al., "Alfar islámico en Almería", pp. 209–210.

⁶⁸ Flores Escobosa et al., "Alfar islámico en Almería", pp. 209–210.

Table 4. Ceramic fabric groups identified from Mértola.

Fabric	Summary description and principal inclusions	Ware types and most common vessel forms	Production centre
Mértola 1	See Seville fabric VI. See photomicrograph 5.	Cook ware e.g. ‘cazuela de costillas’.	Vicinity Seville. Similar to Seville VIa and Écija 1.
Mértola 2	Fine red-firing fabric. Quartz 7%; white mica (probably muscovite) 10%; Sandstone <1%; Chert <1%; Limestone 1%; Iron rich pellets 3%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure between 0.2mm–0.3mm.	Table ware e.g. ‘ataifor’.	Probably local—matches description from analyses by Zozaya and Aparicio Yagüe. ⁶⁹
Mértola 3	Coarse red-firing fabric. Quartz 25%; white mica (probably muscovite) 2%; Plagioclase and alkali feldspar 2%; heterogeneous rock fragments including Sandstone 2%; Schist <1%; Granite 1%; large iron rich pellets measure up to 1.5mm. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure between 0.1mm–0.4mm except the iron rich pellets.	Cook ware e.g. ‘olla’.	Probably local—recovered from a context associated with a kiln.
Mértola 4	Coarse buff-firing fabric. Quartz 5%; Limestone 2%; Biotite mica 10%; Plagioclase and alkali feldspar 2%; with heterogeneous rock fragments including Granite 1%; Sandstone 1%; Phyllite <1%; Iron rich pellets 1%. Inclusions are sub-rounded and measure from 0.1mm–1.2mm.	Storage ware e.g. ‘tinaja estampillada’.	Unknown.
Mértola 5A	See Seville fabric Va. See photomicrograph 6.	Table ware e.g. ‘ataifor’ with <i>cuerda seca</i> decoration.	Possibly Seville?
Mértola 5B	Fine buff-firing fabric. Quartz 5%; Limestone 15%; Biotite mica 1%; Sericite <1%; Iron rich pellets 5%. Inclusions are sub-rounded with inclusions measuring between 0.1mm–0.4mm.	Table ware e.g. ‘jarrita’.	Probably ‘local’—matches description from analyses by Zozaya and Aparicio Yagüe. ⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Zozaya and Aparicio Yagüe, “Análisis de cerámicas andaluses”.

results). Three samples display fabrics which can be identified as local products, based on the analysis of the sherds from a production context, and following the work of Zozaya and Aparicio Yagüe.⁷⁰

Two of the six samples, however, display very similar fabrics to those identified as products of Seville. The first is a sherd with *cuerda seca* decoration. Déléry has already suggested that *cuerda seca* was produced in Seville, during the Almohad period,⁷¹ but no examples of *cuerda seca* were identified or analysed amongst misfired or waster pottery from the production site of La Cartuja. Nevertheless, it is probable that any vessels produced in Seville would have been made from the same, or at least similar, clay deposits, to those readily available in close proximity to the settlement, on the banks of the Guadalquivir. Any *cuerda seca* ceramics made in Seville are therefore, likely to display the same geological inclusions as other fine pottery produced in the city. We can hypothesise that this one example of *cuerda seca* pottery found at Mértola was produced in Seville, however confirmation of this theory would require further testing by chemical analysis.⁷²

The second sample which was probably made in Seville is a casserole dish (or *cazuela de costillas*), which shows a comparable red-firing fabric to those found in the Seville samples. This is significant, as only very rarely has the movement of common vessel forms over long-distances been proposed in Almohad al-Andalus.⁷³ It should also be noted that this red-firing fabric is identical to the example of Seville ceramic production recovered from the *qaṣr* at Écija. These results therefore allow us to suggest that while most pottery made in Seville was consumed in the city, a small number of vessels made in this red-firing fabric were exported from the city to other locations in al-Andalus.

⁷⁰ Zozaya and Aparicio Yagüe, "Análisis de cerámicas andalusíes".

⁷¹ Claire Déléry, "Contribution to the evaluation of trade and cultural relations between Christian countries and Islamic al-Andalus using *cuerda seca* ceramics as a historical source (10th–13th centuries)", *Al-Masāq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* (forthcoming).

⁷² *Cuerda seca* vessels are usually made from fine ceramic fabrics, which can be problematic to characterize using petrology alone because they often contain a limited number of small, non-diagnostic inclusions. Chemical analyses can be useful in such cases because they identify the trace elements present in both clay and temper, which vary depending on the source of production. For further information on chemical analyses see Tite, "Pottery production, distribution and consumption", pp. 197–200.

⁷³ References to the movement of domestic pottery are rare, though see the suggestion by Rosario Huarte Cambra and Pilar Lafuente Ibáñez that casserole dishes with straight handles have a possible North African origin, in their article, "La Cerámica", p. 408.

The analysis again indicates that the majority of the ceramics recovered from Almohad contexts at Mértola were local products, but that the degree of self-sufficiency in ceramic production was lower when compared to larger settlements, such as Seville. The presence of two examples of non-local products, probably imported from Seville, confirms previous work, which has indicated a degree of contact with the Almohad capital.⁷⁴ Lastly, the results of my analysis, combined with those of others, seem to suggest an increasing reliance on other settlements which had access to the Atlantic Ocean, thus corroborating the historical sources which stress the importance of this region.

The picture that begins to emerge from the analyses in this study is one of settlements which are largely self-sufficient in terms of ceramic production. However, small quantities of non-local pottery were identified at all three settlements discussed here, indicating that large cities, such as Seville, probably exported a limited quantity of ceramics to smaller settlements, such as Mértola and Écija, during the Almohad period. Although we must be cautionary in interpreting the relatively small number of samples analysed in this study, the evidence presented here suggests the movement of ceramics, and confirms the patterns of trade and exchange established by historical studies. The results outlined here indicate the trade and exchange not only of decorated pottery, but also common cookware vessels, such as *cazuelas*. This in turn suggests that both highly-decorated forms such as *cuerda seca*,⁷⁵ and common forms of pottery, were the subject of specialized production.

It would be wrong, however, to imply that large cities, such as Seville, operated solely as specialized ceramic producers, and suppliers to other settlements in this area. The evidence of my analysis clearly shows that Seville also imported pottery including large vessels from elsewhere. The pattern of ceramic production and consumption in south-western al-Andalus during the Almohad period was clearly complex, encompassing both local manufacture and the selected import of vessels. The results of my analysis enrich this complexity by showing that it is no longer sufficient to consider that only small, highly-decorated ceramic vessels were traded and exchanged in this region.

⁷⁴ Gómez Martínez, "Mértola islámica", p. 653.

⁷⁵ Mazzoli-Guintard, *Ciudades de al-Andalus*, p. 201.

The discovery of non-local, common ceramic forms, such as cook-ware, has important implications for our understanding of the movement of goods through trade and exchange in Almohad al-Andalus. While the petrological analysis of ceramics outside of Seville was conducted on a relatively small scale, and though problems remain in identifying the production sources of a number of vessels, my analysis has demonstrated the important potential of testing Almohad archaeological ceramics from south-western al-Andalus through petrology. Further scientific analysis will reveal a more detailed pattern of the trade and exchange of ceramic vessels in this region, thus providing a more nuanced picture of Almohad Andalusí economies than that gained from the study of ceramic typologies or historical sources alone.

PART IV

CONQUEST AND COLONISERS:
AL-ANDALUS AND BEYOND IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

THE ANDALUSI HOUSE IN GRANADA (THIRTEENTH TO SIXTEENTH CENTURIES)

*Antonio Orihuela**

1. TERRITORIAL SETTING AND URBAN CONTEXT¹

1.1. *Location, climate, and site*

The exceptional location of Granada in the heart of the massive natural fortress of the Bética mountain range allows it to dominate a valley that measures 50 km in length by 35 km at its greatest width, has an average altitude of 600 m, and is surrounded by mountainous areas ranging from 1000 to 3500 m in height. This valley, through which the Genil River flows, remained isolated from the great communication routes that crossed the Iberian Peninsula in antiquity. It is composed of fertile terrain whose irrigation is guaranteed by the great reserves of water accumulated in the mountains of the Sierra Nevada.

Granada's climate is similar to that of Spain's southern sub-plateau: its temperatures display pronounced characteristics of a continental interior, although the city is located only 50 km from the Mediterranean. In the region of Andalucía, it constitutes an abnormal thermal nucleus, due to its average temperatures as well as its annual conditions and fluctuations. Winters are cold and prolonged and summers are very warm, while springs and autumns are brief and temperate, but with frequent frosts. The average daily temperature exceeds 20°C in the four warm months between June and September, although the average low temperature only rises above 10°C in July and August.

Precipitation is essentially Mediterranean in character, with summer droughts and rains occurring approximately 90 days per year, in

* This article was published in Spanish with the title "La casa andalusí en Granada (siglos XIII–XVI)", in *La Casa Meridional: Correspondencias* (Seville: Junta de Andalucía, 2001), pp. 299–314. It has been revised and adapted for the present English version, and translated by Lisa Mosier.

¹ Any study of mediating factors in the formation and evolution of the city of Granada should be based on the first detailed investigation of Spanish cities that employed the geographic method: Joaquín Bosque Maurel, *Geografía Urbana de Granada* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1988).

spring, winter, and autumn. The annual average of only 475 litres/m² in the area of Granada is insufficient for the normal development of vegetation, but fortunately in the Sierra Nevada rainfall exceeds 1000 litres/m² per year. There are abrupt alternations between rainy and dry years in which precipitation can increase or decrease by up to 50% of the average. The most common cycles are usually one to two rainy years followed by two to four dry years.

These climatic characteristics combined with human intervention have produced a varied landscape that was fundamentally modified in the Islamic period with the implementation of irrigation. Great contrasts exist between irrigated and dry land; fertile green valleys are surrounded by eroding, barren hills.

Granada was able to eclipse the other settlements in the area due to several important factors: its agricultural potential, the ease of water provision, its location at a crossroads of local and regional character in the valley of the River Genil, and above all, its defensive capacity.

The urban settlement, which can be classified as a mountain city by its location and site,² was initially established in the hills bounded by the Genil and the Darro rivers, with three tributaries of the Genil nearby; thus the supply of fresh water from the surrounding high mountain ranges was assured all year round.

The location also has some negative characteristics, such as the danger of floods, the difficulty of communication due to the complex and uneven topography, and high seismic activity. However, in this last respect, by chance or due to empirical wisdom of the ancients, most of the historic centre was located on hills made up of aggregates that are much less sensitive to earthquakes than are the Vega's quaternary alluvial terraces.

1.2. *Plan and urban development*

The oldest vestiges of the city yet discovered in archaeological excavations date to the Iberian culture of the seventh century B.C.E. They are part of a walled settlement located on a hill by the bank of the Darro, now integrated into the extensive urban quarter known as the Albaicín.³ The same site was maintained in the Roman, Visigothic,

² Bosque, *Geografía Urbana de Granada*, p. 38.

³ Andrés Adroher Auroux and Marcos López López, "Iliberri: origen y desarrollo de la ciudad ibero-romana de Granada", in *Jesucristo y el Emperador Cristiano*. Exhibition

and initial Islamic periods, constituting the fortified enclosure called the Alcazaba (Ar. *al-qasabah*).

The selection of Elvira—some 10 km away and more centrally located with respect to the Vega—as capital of the amiral and caliphal province, produced a decline in the development of Granada. However, the return of the capital to the city on the Darro when it became the seat of the Zīrid dynasty during the eleventh century, initiated a period of rapid growth that caused Granada to become one of the most important cities in Europe in the fourteenth century, remaining the largest on the Iberian Peninsula until the sixteenth century.⁴

The reuse of the pre-existing Iberian city explains the absence of an orthogonal plan in Roman Iliberri, which had been a municipality of minor importance. Perhaps the most influential urban-planning decision in the evolution of the city was made in the middle of the eleventh century, when the Zīrid monarchs located the great mosque and the souk in the plain, defining a new urban centre which remains today.

The establishment of the Nasrid reign in 1237 brought with it another critical urban development, limited this time to the sphere of the court. The fortified palatine city known as the Alhambra was built on the hill opposite the Alcazaba, which thenceforth was known as 'Antigua', or 'Old'. The new walled outskirts occupied slopes next to the Alhambra and other parts of the hillsides above the primitive pre-Islamic settlement, but soon the direction of the development toward the Vega initiated by the Zīrids continued, and became the preferred direction for urban expansion after 1492.⁵

The city that capitulated to the Catholic Monarchs had a labyrinthine plan, with very limited public space, and winding main roads leading from the gates of the outer walls and the remains of the older inner walls into the souks and to the great mosque. The secondary streets that accessed the houses terminated in impasses, which compartmentalized the residential fabric into small districts. The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century interventions did little to modify the plan of the higher districts; they were focused within the lower city, to which they added

catalogue, ed. Francisco Javier Martínez Medina (Córdoba: Publicaciones Obra Social y Cultural CajaSur, 2000), p. 449.

⁴ Ángel Isac, "Granada", in *Atlas Histórico de Ciudades Europeas: I. Península Ibérica*, ed. Manuel Guardia, Francisco Javier Monclus and José Luis Oyon (Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, 1994), p. 318.

⁵ Luis Seco de Lucena Paredes, *La Granada Nazarí del Siglo XV* (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra, 1975).

new elements of orthogonal design. These did not follow a unified plan, and as a result these extensions are not clearly jointed together.⁶

1.3. *Division of the landscape: evolution and tendencies*

The long and complex process of urban development outlined in the previous section should give some indication of the difficulty of studying how the division of the landscape evolved. Urban archaeology, initiated in the 1980s, has still not produced significant results in this field in regards to medieval architecture.⁷

From the beginning of the fifteenth century, with the loss of Antequera in 1410, Granada received great migratory waves of Muslims seeking safe refuge in the Nasrid capital, although there is no indication that the perimeter of the city was extended with new walled quarters as a result. The increase in population caused the urban fabric to become denser, filling up unbuilt space, orchards, and even old cemeteries that remained within the city walls; the density was perhaps also augmented by a reduction in individual plot sizes.⁸

Some Nasrid houses, such as the one located at No. 4 Calle del Cobertizo de Santa Inés, displays evidence that it was added to by building upwards,⁹ and it is possible that others were divided in two vertically in order to house two families instead of one, as occurred at an unknown date in House No. 9 in the Alcazaba of the Alhambra.¹⁰

The Austrian traveller, Hieronymus Münzer, who visited Granada in 1494, was surprised at the small size of the houses he saw in the city and stated that “in the Christian territory, a house occupies more space than four or five houses of Saracens”.¹¹

⁶ Cristina Viñes Millet, *Historia Urbana de Granada* (Granada: Centro de Estudios Municipales y de Cooperación Internacional, 1999).

⁷ Ángel Rodríguez Aguilera, *Granada Arqueológica* (Granada: Ayuntamiento de Granada, 2001).

⁸ On the urban model commonly followed by Andalusi cities, see the article by Navarro and Jiménez in this volume.

⁹ Antonio Almagro Gorbea, Antonio Orihuela Uzal and Carlos Sánchez Gómez, “La casa nazarí de la Calle del Cobertizo de Santa Inés No. 4, en Granada”, *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* 28 (1992), pp. 135–166.

¹⁰ Antonio Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y Palacios Nazaríes. Siglos XIII y XV* (Seville: Junta de Andalucía, 1996), p. 154.

¹¹ Hieronymus Münzer and Fermín Camacho Evangelista, *Viaje por España y Portugal, Reino de Granada* (Madrid: Asociación Cultural Hispano-Alemana, 1981), p. 48.

In addition to the relocation of the city's Moriscos (Muslims of the former al-Andalus who were forced to embrace the Christian religion at the beginning of the sixteenth century) to the Albaicín, the second half of the sixteenth century saw the arrival of more emigrants from the hinterlands of the Vega, the Lecrín valley, and the Alpujarras, who settled in the same area,¹² but the rebellion of 1568–1570 and the expulsion which followed caused the abandonment and ruin of many houses. The new Christian occupants added deserted adjacent plots to their property, converting them to orchards and gardens. In this manner, the periurban hillside house type, called in Arabic *karm* (from which is derived the Castilian *carmen*), came to be located in the hills within the city.¹³ Old photographs indicate that the Albaicín retained its low urban density until the end of the nineteenth century. However, the population again drastically increased when the many families affected by the opening of the Gran Vía in the lower city (1895–1908) relocated to the Albaicín.¹⁴ The move caused the partitioning of plots and subdivision of dwellings, with many old single-family courtyard houses converted into lodgings for six or more families in cramped conditions. The great demand for inhabitable space led to the purchase and assimilation of rooms in adjacent houses conveniently located on the same floor, giving rise to shared spaces known as *engalabernos* between the plots. The situation continued until the end of the 1970s, but the subsequent general increase in the standard of living and the arrival of new, more affluent families have allowed some courtyard houses to regain the single-family character of the Andalusí tradition. The six houses described in the next section are located within the Albaicín quarter, whose valuable architectural and urban legacy motivated its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site, as an extension to the Alhambra and Generalife, in 1994.

¹² Luis del Mármol Carvajal, *Historia del Rebelión y Castigo de los Moriscos del Reyno de Granada* (Second impression, Madrid: Sancha, 1797; reprinted, Granada: Consejería de Cultura, 1996), pp. 170, 206.

¹³ José Tito Rojo and José Casares Porcel, *El Carmen de la Victoria: un jardín regionalista en el contexto de la historia de los Cármenes de Granada* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1999), pp. 15–45.

¹⁴ Manuel Martín Rodríguez, *La Gran Vía de Granada: cambio económico y reforma interior urbana en la España de la Restauración* (Granada: Caja General de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad de Granada, 1986), pp. 101–121.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ANDALUSI HOUSE IN GRANADA

2.1. *Typological antecedents*

The house organized around one or more courtyards was the preferred residential type in the urban settlements of the principal Mesopotamian and Mediterranean civilizations during past millennia. In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, square or rectangular courtyards with porticos on four sides proliferated throughout the Mediterranean. The rapid formation and expansion of Islamic architecture, which basically fused the Greco-Roman and the Persian Sassanian traditions, produced a type of rectangular courtyard with porticos only on the minor sides. This new arrangement, which was already formalized in Madīnat al-Zahrā' during the tenth century in the residence known as the Casa de la Alberquilla,¹⁵ was employed particularly in the palaces and notable houses of Nasrid Granada. The type evolved in later periods with variations in the arrangement of pools, planting beds, and raised walkways that covered the area of the courtyard, with a tendency to diminish or eliminate the landscaped portion becoming pronounced towards the end of the Almohad period in the mid-thirteenth century.¹⁶

In Nasrid Granada the most common form of pool was centred in the courtyard and extended along its longitudinal axis, at times approaching the two bordering porticos. The gardens, when they existed, were limited to two planting beds parallel to the pool. Although this arrangement may be considered the hallmark of Nasrid architecture, other well-known forms from previous periods co-existed at this time, such as a courtyard with a small pool located next to one of the porticos, or with cruciform gardens. In some houses of limited dimensions, there was a small container for a tree and aromatic plants in place of the pool.¹⁷

¹⁵ Alfonso Jiménez Martín, "Los jardines de Madīnat al-Zahrā'", *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrā'* 1 (1987), pp. 81–92, and Almagro's contribution in this volume.

¹⁶ Julio Navarro Palazón and Pedro Jiménez Castillo, *Una casa islámica en Murcia: estudio de su ajuar (siglo XIII)* (Murcia: Centro de Estudios Árabes y Arqueológicos "Ibn Arabi" Ayuntamiento de Murcia, 1991), pp. 89–91.

¹⁷ Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y Palacios Nazaríes*, pp. 22–25.

2.2. *The elements of the courtyard house: the Nasrid period*
(thirteenth to fifteenth centuries)

In the urban Andalusí house, the courtyard was the centre of family life, the place by which light and air was received, since the house was isolated from the street in order to ensure privacy and security. The indirect entryway and the absence of openings, apart from the door, in the ground floor façade guaranteed the intimacy of the house.

The two examples of Nasrid houses studied here are the Casa de Zafra, built in the fourteenth to fifteenth century, and named after the surname of its first Christian owner, Hernando de Zafra, Secretary of Ferdinand and Isabella; and Daralhorra, built in the fifteenth century, named from the Arabic *Dār al-Ḥurrah*, after an honorific title used by Nasrid princesses. These houses were built on plots measuring 383 m² and 357 m², respectively, not including the area dedicated to orchards contained by the latter. They have rectangular courtyards with the major axis oriented in the preferred north-south direction, which allowed their main rooms, located behind the porticos of the minor sides of the courtyard, to be open to the northern wind and midday sun. The rooms located on the north side were larger than those opposite, although in Daralhorra the southern chamber is now larger, due to its later expansion as the chapel of the convent installed there at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

During restoration work on the Casa de Zafra, archaeological evidence of a previous distribution was detected, with porticos of five arches and the absence of aisles in the east side. Later the porticos were reduced to their three central arches with the intention of creating aisles on the east side and extending those of the west. At this stage an upper floor was constructed in the entire house; these modifications notably increased the total built area (Figs. 1 and 2).¹⁸

Daralhorra, which belonged to the Nasrid royal family, appears to follow a unified plan which, due to its later date of construction, retains the characteristics of this type while at the same time reaching maturity in its evolution (Fig. 3). The main rooms are double height, while the house has two floors of secondary rooms on the major sides. Over the eaves, which unify the four sides of the courtyard in spite of their diverse compositions, a second floor equipped with an access gallery rises above

¹⁸ Antonio Almagro Gorbea and Antonio Orihuela Uzal, *La Casa Nazarí de Zafra* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1997).

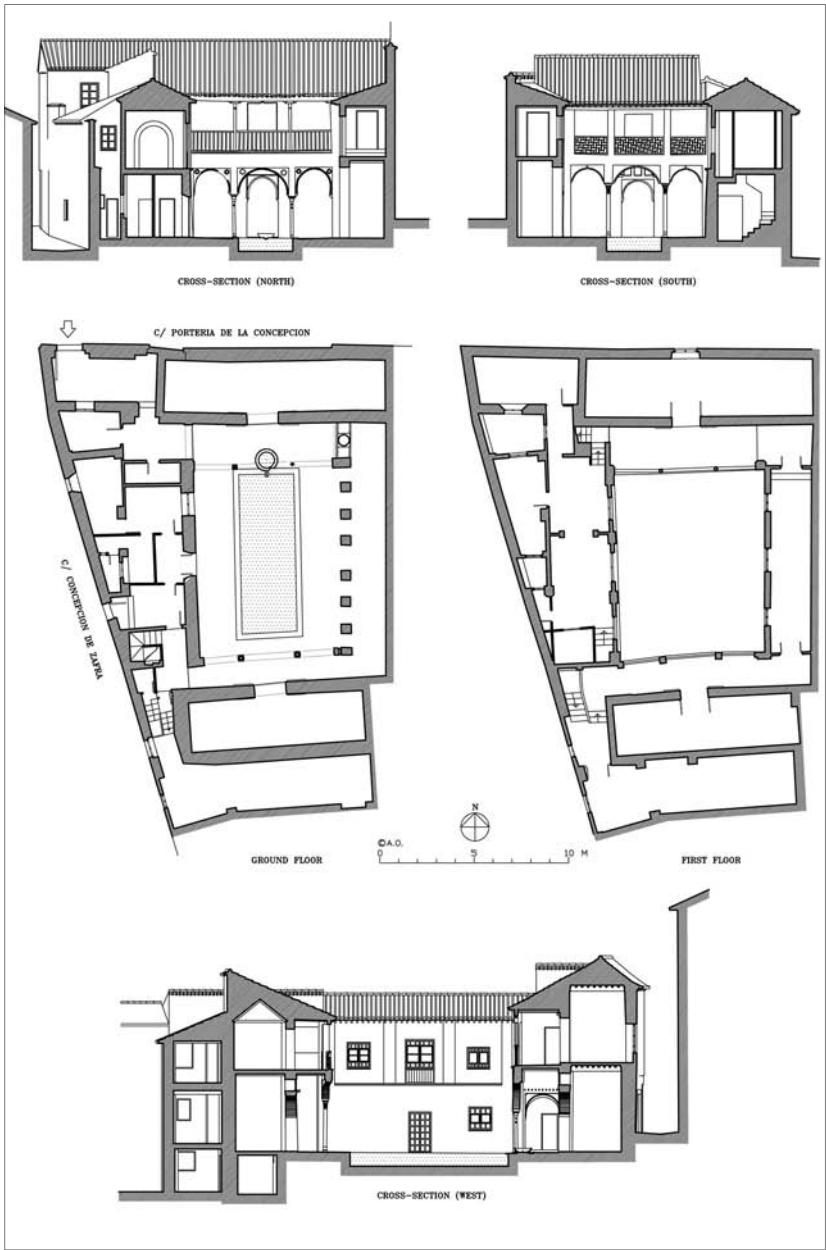


Fig. 1. Casa de Zafra: plans and cross-sections (after Almagro and Orihuela, *La Casa Nazari de Zafra*).



Fig. 2. Casa de Zafra: courtyard view from the north side.

the north aisle (Fig. 4). In the centre of the superimposed rooms of this aisle, individual projecting belvederes open towards the landscape. The upper floors are accessed by two stairs located in diagonally opposite corners of the courtyard. In the north-eastern corner of the building, over the level of the tile roofs, there is a tower belvedere open in all directions that allows direct visual contact with the Alhambra.¹⁹

Porticos played an important role in the configuration of the courtyard: at least one was present in all Nasrid palaces and houses of importance. Originally the porticos would have had tiled roofs, but as upper floors came into common use, access galleries were built on top of them. In both superimposed elements, a concentration of ornamentation took place. Both the porticos and galleries also served

¹⁹ Orihucla Uzal, *Casas y Palacios Nazaríes*, pp. 229–241.

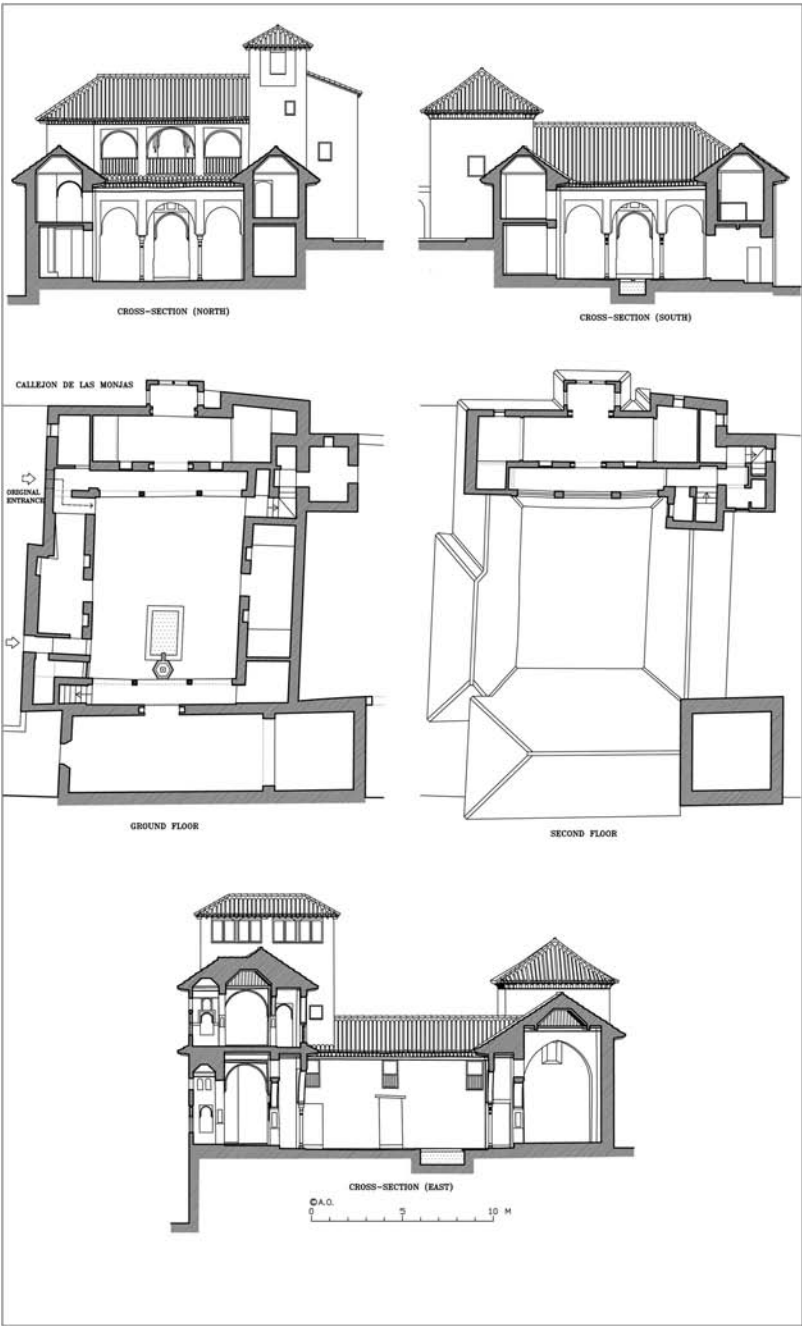


Fig. 3. Daralhorra: plans and cross-sections.



Fig. 4. Daralhorra: gallery on the north side of the courtyard.

to protect the wooden doors and decoration of the upper and lower main rooms.

Protection against excessive sunlight in the courtyard in summer was obtained by adding an arbour for climbing plants that grew from a corner. In more recent times this has been achieved by the use of awnings, although their lesser capacity to release hot air can have negative thermal effects on the upper floor.

The houses were frequently equipped with water distributed by irrigation channels and ceramic pipes, and contained in large earthenware jars or cisterns. The inhabitants also relied on drains in the courtyard and latrine, both connected with the sanitation system by means of brick sewers.

2.3. *Cultural influences and typological evolution: the Morisco period
(sixteenth century)*

The construction and decorative techniques and the typological characteristics of the Nasrid house were maintained in the domestic architecture of the Moriscos until their final expulsion at the beginning of the seventeenth century; they were even carried to places of emigration in the Maghreb. The Castilian influences were primarily manifested in the decorative motifs carved in the wooden corbels and brackets as well as in the disposition of more galleries around the courtyard to facilitate the circulation of the upper floors.

The introverted character and the desire for privacy associated with the Nasrid house were conserved. It was commonly obtained by the almost total absence of openings in the exterior gates, with the exception of the sober brick arched gates that were marked by a rectangular frame (*alfiz*). Other typical features were the use of a small door set within the large wooden entrance doors, the indirect circulation of the entryway, the absence of windows in the lower floor, and the use of projecting latticed windows in the upper storey. However, throughout the sixteenth century, various royal orders obliged the Moriscos to leave the doors of their houses open in order to prevent the preservation of their religion and customs in the intimacy of the home.²⁰

In the Andalusi house in general, and in the Nasrid house of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in particular, the ground floor was clearly given more importance than the upper floor, when one existed, since these chambers had lower ceiling heights and less decoration. However, in the fifteenth century, the construction of upper floors must have become more common, both as additions to single-storey houses, and in new construction. One can verify in Daralhorra that the ornamentation of the upper stories equals and even exceeds that of the ground floor, since the pitched ceiling structure of the former allowed for more decorative possibilities than the simple flat ceilings of the latter.

The same tendency increased in the Morisco house from the beginning of the sixteenth century: the wooden galleries surrounding the courtyard on the upper floor surpassed the lower porticos in ornamentation, after porticos supported by pilasters at their ends replaced the elegant Nasrid arcades. The doubling of the superimposed main

²⁰ Mármol Carvajal, *Historia del rebelión*, pp. 132–162.

rooms of the same dimensions is perhaps indicative of their seasonal use, the ground floor for the four warm months and the upper floor during the rest of the year, since the temperature difference between them is notable. This seasonal use was maintained in the courtyard houses of the Granadan wealthy classes of the lower city until the end of the nineteenth century.

The porticos constituted intermediate spaces between the rooms and the courtyard which helped protect against the weather. The galleries were located above the porticos of the ground floor in order to organize the circulation of the upper floors. The number and location of the galleries varied depending on the size, form, and orientation of the courtyard, and the disposition of the aisles. With the existence of sufficient galleries, a single stair located in one corner of the courtyard could serve as access to the upper floor. In the case of a tower or third floor, a secondary stair was used. It is possible to establish an evolution from the Nasrid house type with one or two porticos located in the minor sides of the rectangular courtyards to the Morisco house with galleries on four sides, which also exhibits a Castilian influence primarily from Toledo and La Mancha.

The plans of the four Morisco houses studied here cover the different possible courtyard arrangements according to the presence of porticos and galleries in one, two, three or four sides.

The house located at No. 2 Calle de Yanguas occupies a plot of 125 m², not including the garden by which it was formerly accessed. It has aisles on three sides, but a portico and gallery only on the northern side, in front of the main rooms (Figs. 5 and 6). In its carved wooden elements one can observe the combination of Nasrid, Gothic and Renaissance ornamental features that characterizes Morisco architecture. The north room on the upper storey contains all the distinguishing elements of multifunctional Nasrid rooms: niches for water jars in the doorjambs; decorative tile designs on the floor; cupboards in the walls on both sides of the entry arch; and alcoves with flat ceilings in the ends of the room. In addition to a small pool in the centre of the courtyard, the house contains a reservoir located below an existing secondary portico in the west nave.

Photographs from the nineteenth century show the state of the house at No. 12 Cuesta de las Tomasas (Fig. 7) and its urban surroundings to have been very different from the present day. For example, it was not freestanding, but grouped with other buildings to the south and west that have since disappeared. The annexation of these plots increased

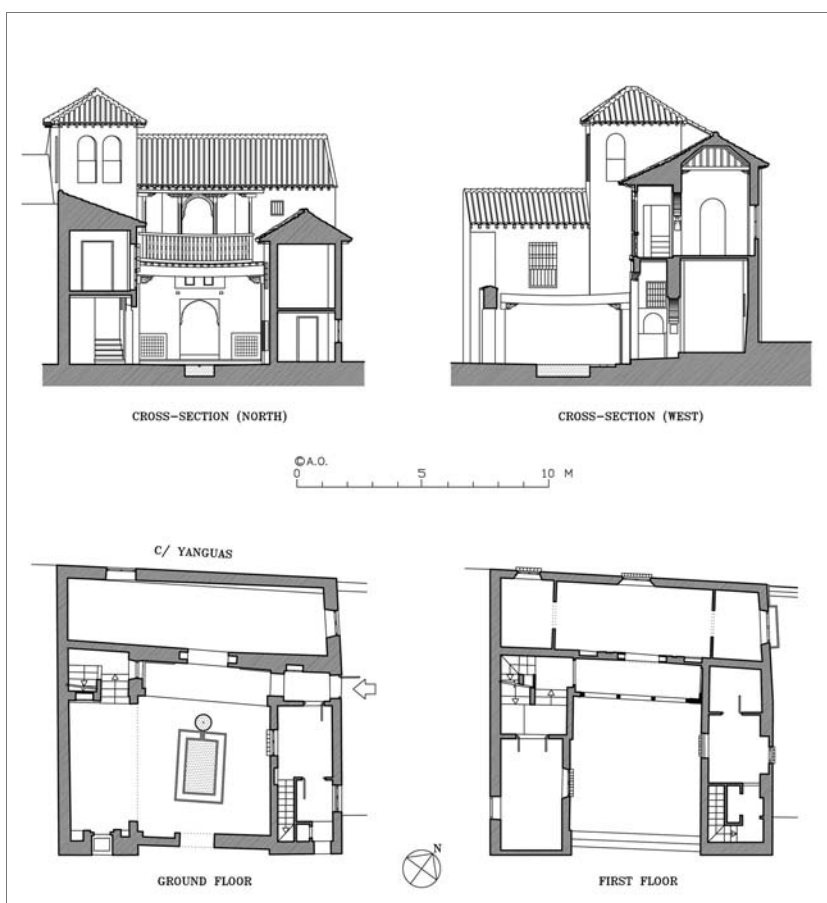


Fig. 5. House at No. 2 Calle de Yanguas: plans and cross-sections.

the area of the gardens of what is known as Carmen de Aben Humeya, in which the house is now integrated.²¹

The house, which occupies a plot of 85 m², is organized around a rectangular courtyard with a small water basin, and has porticos and galleries on the north and south sides. At the present time, it has three aisles although it is possible that it once had another one facing the midday sun. The beams in the ceiling of the north portico have

²¹ Javier Piñar Samos and Vicente del Amo, *José García Ayola, fotógrafo de Granada (1863–1900)* (Granada: Caja General de Ahorros de Granada, 1996), p. 81.



Fig. 6. House at No. 2 Calle de Yanguas: courtyard view from the south side.

an unusual marquetry ornamentation in place of the paintings that decorate other ceilings in this house (Colour Plate 14).

The house at No. 9 Callejón de San Luis Alto (Fig. 8), which occupies a plot of 102 m², is interesting, despite its small size, for the preservation of its many original elements, including zoomorphic paintings on its wooden ceilings. The façade, three stories in height, has an entry with a brick arch framed by an *alfiz* and a large wooden outer door, with a smaller inset door for daily use. The courtyard is located above street level, and thus presents only two storeys (Fig. 9); it has galleries on three of its sides with an open stair on the fourth side. Water is provided in a large earthenware jar and a circular basin next to the stairs. The house has naves with rooms only in the north and south sides, since the east side is occupied exclusively by the gallery connecting the two, which is carried by two brick pillars with a mixed form of both curvilinear and rectilinear profiles. The set of carved wooden corbels supporting the floor and ceiling of the galleries have a lobed design inspired by Gothic motifs, which allows the building to be dated to the first quarter of the sixteenth century.

The house located at No. 7 Calle de San Buenaventura occupies the corner formed by that street and the Plaza de Aliatar. It is located on



Fig. 7. House at No. 12 Cuesta de las Tomasas: plans and cross-sections.

a plot of 213 m², with aisles on three sides, but porticos and galleries on four (Fig. 10). These are carried by brick supports, with angular corner supports and round ones in the centre of the major sides. The main naves to the north and south consist of two floors, although the latter had been removed by the end of the nineteenth century, and the east side had three floors of lesser height. The house has a small pool somewhat off-centre with respect to the courtyard, and a tower belvedere in the corner of the two façades. The remarkable artistic interest of the ensemble derives from its regulated plan, grand proportions and wealth of ornamentation. On the ground floor, it has Renaissance-style corbels with anthropomorphic carvings and others with Gothic tracery, while those of the galleries and tower are strictly Gothic style (Fig. 11). Initially it is possible that the building had no apertures in the exterior



Fig. 8. House at No. 9 Callejón de San Luis Alto: plans and cross-sections.

walls apart from the door, the window of the tower, and the ventilation of the latrine, but in the nineteenth century the main façade was remodelled, opening balconies in the mezzanine and stairs.

2.4. *The scale of the Andalusí house type*

The plans of Nasrid houses excavated in the Alhambra show a tremendous variety in the area of the plot on which they are built. If one compares the ten preserved within the Alcazaba of the Alhambra, all of which contain a courtyard, the average plot size is 52 m². But if



Fig. 9. House at No. 9 Callejón de San Luis Alto: courtyard view from the south-east corner.

one divides them into two types that could be called ‘complete’ and ‘elementary’, according to whether they have all the fundamental elements belonging to the Andalusí courtyard house,²² average areas of 76 m² and 27m² are found for each type, respectively. The location within a military enclosure of limited dimensions probably influenced the small size of these plots. For this analysis, the characteristics required for an Andalusí courtyard house to be considered of the ‘complete’ type are an indirect entryway, hierarchized rooms (principal and secondary), a kitchen and latrine. The development of this programme requires a minimum plot of nearly 50 m².

A comparison of the plans of the other nine houses located in the walled enclosure of the Alhambra, excluding the palaces, provides us

²² Julio Navarro Palazón, “La casa andalusí en Siyāsa: ensayo de una clasificación tipológica”, in *La Casa Hispano-Musulmana. Aportaciones de la Arqueología*, ed. Jesús Bermúdez López and André Bazzana (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, 1990), pp. 178–183.

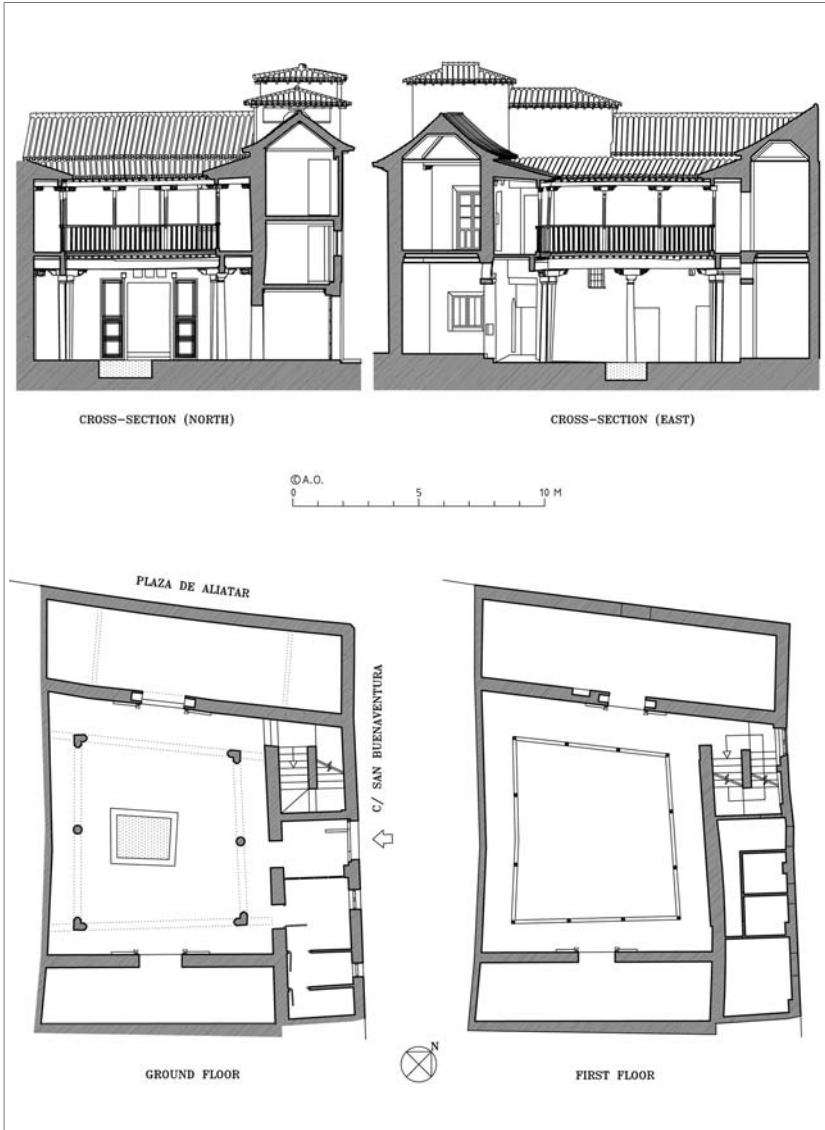


Fig. 10. House at No. 7 Calle de San Buenaventura: plans and cross-sections (proposed restoration project).



Fig. 11. House at No. 7 Calle de San Buenaventura: different types of corbels in the porticos of the courtyard.

with plot areas between 82 and 316 m², with an average area of 186 m². Of these only the house located at No. 47 Calle Real preserves its volumes, at least partially. Its plot area was 215 m², and it can be considered representative of this group.

On the other hand, the plots of the four remaining complete houses in the Albaicín vary between 164 and 383 m², not including the annexed orchard which some may have, with an average plot size of 281 m². There is no doubt that these well-preserved and richly-decorated houses belonged to notable persons and are not representative of those occupied by the common people of the city, which were smaller and less resistant to the deterioration of time.

The discussion so far has treated only structures that could be considered houses, but other buildings with greater dimensions existed that could be classified as palaces. Some are well preserved, while others are known from consolidated archaeological remains or planimetric documentation of those that have disappeared. All these are located on plots of more than 500 m² (exclusive of the annexed orchards and gardens), the largest naturally being the residence of the sultan, the

Palacio de Comares. The palace occupies an area of 2940 m², of which 851m² correspond to the courtyard. From this data it is possible to deduce that in Nasrid Granada the scale of the building had little relevance in the choice of the various types used in houses and palaces. Examples of residential buildings of the same type are preserved, with areas that vary by a proportion of ten to one.

The analysis of thirty houses constructed by the Moriscos in the sixteenth century, which remain standing and have been documented in architectural drawings, reveals an average plot size of 158 m², with courtyards averaging 26 m². These measurements may seem excessively generous, but it should be kept in mind that preserved houses were perhaps the largest and best-constructed, belonging to the numerous wealthy Moriscos who lived in the Albaicín, and therefore not entirely representative of the real size of houses belonging to common people.

3. CONSTRUCTION

3.1. *Construction techniques and systems*

The few constructions of the eleventh century preserved in Granada were built with sandstone ashlar (for example, the minaret of what is now the Church of San José, or the Monaita Gate) or with rammed earth walls of rich lime mortar with brick vaults (for example, Bañuelo, or the wall of the Alcazaba). During the dominion of the Maghrebi dynasties in the twelfth century, stone was replaced by brick, which in conjunction with the rammed earth walls, was used with great mastery by the Almohads (for example, the minaret of what is now the Church of San Juan de los Reyes).

The Nasrids used a construction technique known as *tapial*, rammed earth walls with the exterior faces made with a rich lime mortar, and the wall cavities economically filled with argillaceous earth (i.e. consisting mostly of clay), gravel, and a little lime. In the lower parts, to avoid capillary humidity, they used walls surrounded by brick and containers filled with large smooth river stones.²³ The same Nasrid techniques continued to be used by the Moriscos, who reduced the thickness of the

²³ Francisco Javier López Martínez, "Tapias y tapiales", *Loggia: Arquitectura y Restauración* 3, no. 8 (1999), pp. 80–82.

rammed earth walls to a minimum range of 45–55 cm for the ground floor and 30–45 cm for the upper floors.

In the Nasrid houses, the porticos had arcades supported by brick pillars or marble columns. The Moriscos simplified this system of construction and resolved the carriage of the flat ceilings of the porticos by means of great wooden main beams supported by pilasters at the frame-end walls, or by central supports, with header beams at one or both ends, and cantilevered by means of double corbels embedded in the walls.²⁴

3.2. *Materials and their sources*

Nasrid architecture is characterized by the use of economical materials found in the kingdom of Granada, but which were used with great skill. The rammed earth walls were made with earth that came from the natural conglomerate found in the substrate of the hills on which the city was founded. In fact, in some archaeological excavations it is difficult to distinguish the natural carbonated conglomerate in the upper layers of the earth from the foundations of the earth and lime city walls built with the disintegrated particles of the same material. The most valued woods for structural carpentry were pine and oak, brought from the nearby mountain ranges.²⁵ Only in some palatial construction, such as the Cuarto Real de Santo Domingo, has the use of cedar been detected, which would have come from Morocco. The most remarkable characteristic of the carpentry in the Andalusi house is the consistently small size of the beam sections, except in the supporting members of the porticos of the Morisco houses.²⁶

The curved roof tiles, which came from the later Roman tradition (but which are incorrectly thought to be Arab in origin), were used in nearly all roofs of residential buildings. The great thermal changes of

²⁴ Antonio Orihuela Uzal, “Técnicas constructivas de la arquitectura doméstica de los moriscos granadinos”, in *Actas del I Congreso Nacional de Historia de la Construcción*, ed. Antonio de las Casas Gómez (Madrid: Instituto Juan de Herrera, 1996), pp. 395–398.

²⁵ Carmen López Perúñez, “La carpintería en Granada, de Manuel Gómez-Moreno Martínez cien años después”, in *La Carpintería en Granada* (Granada: Fundación Rodríguez Acosta, 2001), p. 28.

²⁶ Antonio Orihuela Uzal, “The use of wood in Morisco houses in sixteenth-century Granada (Spain)”, in *Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Construction History*, ed. Malcolm Dunkeld et al. (Cambridge: Construction History Society, 2006), pp. 2363–2378.

the Granadan climate deteriorate flat roofs in a short time, so their use was limited to the robust, vaulted military buildings. Manufacture of the tiles continues today in the nearby municipalities of Jun and Otura.

The painted decoration on wood or gypsum, the carved plaster and wood, and glazed tile patterns constitute decorative techniques which use very economical materials but require great skills of the artisan. The only material that required extraction, transport, and more expensive carving was the white marble that came from the Sierra de Filabres. The Nasrids used it for columns, fountains, flooring, and stone tablets, but the Moriscos, due to their diminished economic resources, rarely employed it. They constructed brick columns instead of marble and eliminated weight in the galleries of the upper floor, replacing the brick pillars the Nasrids had placed in them with lightweight, rectilinear wooden posts.

UNDERSTANDING ARCHITECTURAL CHANGE AT THE ALHAMBRA: STRATIGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE WESTERN GALLERY, COURT OF THE MYRTLES

*Camilla Mileto and Fernando Vegas**

The Alhambra, fortress and residence of the Nasrid rulers of Granada, comprises three main areas: the citadel (Alcazaba), the palaces, and the gardens. Although the origins of the fortress date from the ninth century, most of the buildings and palaces which stand today can be dated between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This group of buildings was constructed by the Nasrids, the last dynasty to rule al-Andalus before the conquest of the Catholic Monarchs in 1492. The Alhambra not only includes buildings conceived or modified during the Islamic period, but also later additions and interventions, which responded to forces of fashion, functional adaptation, stylistic restoration, or simple mending. These interventions began with the conquest of Granada and have continued to the present day.

The present study, commissioned by the Patronato de la Alhambra, is part of a broader research project, begun in 2000, in which historians, geologists and architects are collaborating in applying the methodology of stratigraphic analysis of architecture to this monument for the first time, in order to elucidate the transformation of the Alhambra palaces during their long history. The present study focuses on the upper gallery of the western nave of the Court of the Myrtles, part of the Comares Palace, that was cut off at its southern end when the Renaissance palace was built. The area under discussion is delimited by the Mexuar and the Comares Palace at one end, and the Palace of Charles V at the other. This area of the Alhambra complex is of particular interest to researchers seeking to better understand the physical connection between the Nasrid palaces and the magnificent Renaissance palace constructed on the order of Charles V, King of Spain and Holy Roman

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Emperor (1516–1556). He inherited from his grandparents, Ferdinand and Isabella, a vast kingdom encompassing Spain, the new territories in America, Austria, the Low Countries, and Southern Italy. He planned that Granada would be the capital of his empire, and the Alhambra his main headquarters, and ordered the new palace to be built as an extension of the Nasrid palaces.

The Comares Palace was built by the Nasrid Sultan Muḥammad V (1354–1359 and 1362–1391), although the first constructions in this part of the palace complex were ordered by his grandfather Ismāʿīl I (1314–1325) and his father Yūsuf I (1333–1354). An interesting description of the palace, written in 1362 by Ibn al-Khaṭīb (1313–1374), the Nasrid prime minister and court chronicler, describes the building process of this palace, and its first configuration.¹ At that time, it seems, the rooms in the upper gallery of the western nave were probably used as residential quarters by the women of the court.² The residence underwent later extensions and alterations, especially after the arrival of the Catholic Monarchs, who freely adapted the buildings to new functions and requirements. For example, among the minor changes made soon after the conquest, new rooms for the king and governors were built in a new storey over the existing Mexuar, which was itself transformed from its Islamic function of court of justice into royal chapel. In 1526, Charles V decided to build a large palace alongside the Nasrid palaces, which was internally connected to them (Fig. 1). It is not known how many and what kind of buildings were destroyed in order to make room for his palace, but the most recent studies show that the major spaces of the Comares Palace were respected, and that an attempt was made to integrate the two palaces, despite the aesthetic clash between this massive new architectural volume, and the rather delicate appearance of the Nasrid palaces.³

¹ For a more detailed analysis of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's text from an architectural viewpoint, see Ángel López López and Antonio Orihuela Uzal, "Una nueva interpretación del texto de Ibn al-Jatib sobre la Alhambra en 1362", *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* 26 (1990), pp. 121–144.

² This point was suggested by Leopoldo Torres Balbás, and can be found in Carlos Vílchez Vílchez, *La Alhambra de Leopoldo Torres Balbás. Obras de Restauración y Conservación 1923–1936* (Granada: Comares, 1988), p. 159. The original text is in *Proyecto de Reparación de la Nave de Poniente del Patio de los Arrayanes*, 25–03–1925, Archivo Central de Administración del Estado (Alcalá de Henares, L-13.179–4).

³ Antonio Malpica Cuello, Eva Moreno León, Eva Martín López, and Jesús Bermúdez López, "El subsuelo. Acerca de la implantación del Palacio de Carlos V. Informe

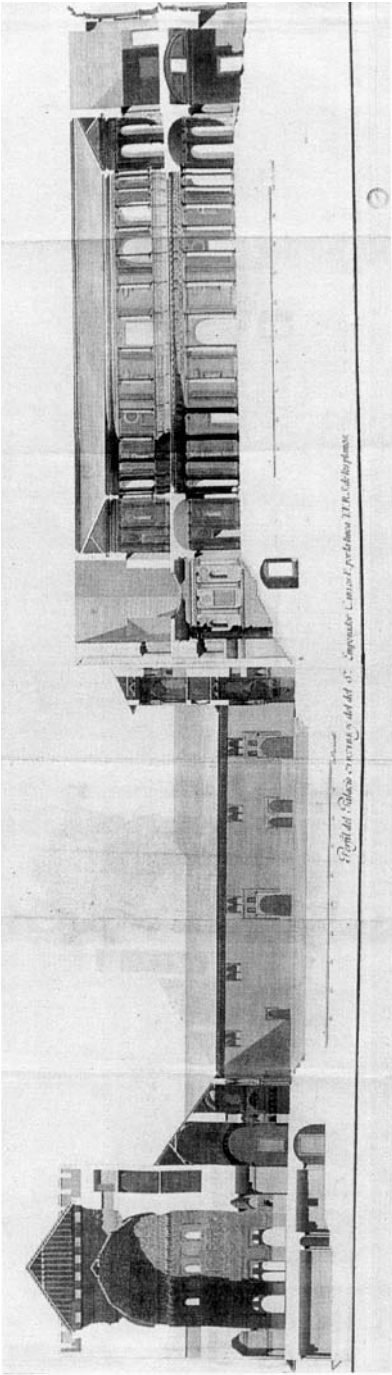


Fig. 1. Section through the Court of the Myrtles and the Palace of Charles V, drawn by Juan de Villanueva and Juan Pedro Arnal. After *Antigüedades Árabes de España* (Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid, 1770), plate VII. By permission of the Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife.



Fig. 2. The state of the gallery during the stratigraphical study.

METHODOLOGY

The study commissioned by the Patronato de la Alhambra involved formulating an historical and constructional analysis of the evolution of this upper gallery in the western nave of the Court of the Myrtles (Fig. 2). At the time this work was undertaken, the fabric was free from the gypsum cladding that was applied in the 1950s, and therefore perfect for direct observation of the traces left by history on the walls. To this end, four parallel lines of research were developed: an historical and documentary study; a stratigraphic analysis of the walls; the classification of materials by means of chemical tests; and a study of the evolution of the layout and fenestration in the room. This article focuses on the investigation, results and conclusions obtained during the stratigraphic analysis of the gallery.

arqueológico”, in *El Palacio de Carlos V. Un Siglo para la Recuperación de un Monumento* (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra, 1995), pp. 93–105.

Stratigraphic analysis of architecture is a powerful methodological tool that makes it possible to identify and document the material data of the fabric, in both an archaeological site and a building. This type of analysis allows scholars to make an objective observation of the different construction techniques and materials that comprise the fabric, and the physical interrelationships between original remains, superimposition, bonds, insertion, etc. An accurate study of the order in which the parts constituting the fabric were constructed allows one to formulate a hypothesis of the various construction phases at the building.

This methodology, as it is used today, was born directly from the studies that Edward C. Harris published in 1979 in his *Principles of Archaeological Stratigraphy*, a text that immediately became a primary point of reference for the discipline of archaeology.⁴ Archaeologists had for over a century been discussing how to perform excavations stratigraphically, that is, following the layers in a site, and Harris's research provided a key contribution to the systemization of that methodology: he defined the principles of archaeological stratigraphy by means of the re-elaboration of the laws of geology, in particular the 'Law of Superposition' and the 'Law of Original Continuity'.

The first law states that in every geological stratification, the upper layers are always younger than the lower ones. The second law affirms that every geological layer was in origin continuous, hence every observable discontinuity is the result of a later modification. Among other contributions, Harris adapted these principles to archaeological stratigraphy, reformulating the 'Law of Superposition', so that in a series of layers, the upper units of stratification are younger and the lower are older;⁵ and the 'Law of Original Continuity', so that if any edge of a deposit is exposed in a vertical view, a part of its original extent or continuity has been destroyed.⁶ This type of study addressed chronological aspects, the diachronic and anachronic relationships of stratification, and the objective analysis of the excavation, and was not simply an historical interpretation of the archaeological finds.

Harris himself was responsible for introducing the stratigraphic study of walls as elements present in archaeological sites. However, the first applications and the systematization and development of the

⁴ Edward C. Harris, *Principles of Archaeological Stratigraphy* (London, 1979; reissued by the Academic Press, 1989).

⁵ Harris, *Principles of Archaeological Stratigraphy*, p. 30.

⁶ Harris, *Principles of Archaeological Stratigraphy*, p. 32.

methodology of stratigraphic studies in architecture were undertaken in the early 1980s by a group of Italian architects.⁷ The procedure involves a detailed, methodical examination of the wall to be studied, identifying the different building works and the relationships between them, that is, a chronology of earliest to latest, how they are superimposed, their breakages, etc. Once these building phases have been identified and systematically arranged, a relative chronology can be established for these interventions. This relative chronology can be compared with studies of the construction materials, or can provide an absolute chronology, allowing one to put a name to each period, if the information is cross-referenced with historical and documentary study.

Despite the close relationship between architectural and archaeological stratigraphy, there are evident conceptual differences which must be taken into account when applying this method to the vertical walls of a building, as observed by the architect Francesco Doglioni.⁸ Above all, archaeological, or horizontal, stratification constitutes a deposit that responds to natural criteria (especially gravity), whereas architectural stratification responds to artificial criteria involving the construction of spaces, that is to say, internal rooms that will be readable as vacuums. This peculiarity involves the presence of many more surfaces, which are visible and legible at the same time; furthermore, the process of deposition of layers does not move in a single direction, as is the case in archaeological sites. Moreover, the surface of the layer, in the case of archaeology, represents the physical limit that separates two different adjacent layers, while in architecture the surface is not only a physical limit but also a finished surface, on which the characteristics proper to that surface can be read.

There are even fundamental operational differences: the stratigraphic reading of an archaeological site is always associated with an excavation, so that, once the characteristics of a layer have been recognised, they are removed and thereby eliminated. On the other hand, in the

⁷ Such as Roberto Parenti, Riccardo Francovich, Tiziano Mannoni, Francesco Bonora and Gian Pietro Brogiolo, who initiated the debate about the subject by publishing their research in the periodical *Archaeologia Medioevale*. At the same time, important contributions were made by architects such as Romeo Ballardini and Francesco Doglioni from the Department of Architectural Restoration, at the Institute of Architecture of Venice University, and Carla Tomasini Pietramellara and Luigi Marino from the Department of the History of Architecture and Monument Restoration, at the Architecture Faculty of Florence University.

⁸ Francesco Doglioni, *Stratigrafia e Restauro: Tra conoscenza e conservazione dell'architettura* (Trieste: Lint Editoriale Associati, 1997), pp. 45–52.

stratigraphic reading of architecture, there is no excavation, so that the layers can be read simultaneously but never completely. It is therefore necessary to bear in mind that the stratigraphic reading of a building can be more or less complete or exhaustive according to the degree of legibility of the stratification.

The collection of material data—such as the materials used, processing, building methods, etc.—plays a fundamental role when formulating a project of conscientious restoration that strives to respect and conserve these same data and to guarantee their survival for posterity. Equally important are the relationships established between these data, because of their capacity to register and show the significance and uniqueness of the marks left by individual interventions.

The mutual objective of the stratigraphic analysis and the restoration project must therefore be a study of the materials from which the building is constructed, in order to conserve it. Conservation of its materials, the possibility of maintaining and transmitting the stratigraphic relationships, and the legibility of the intervention must be guaranteed by a suitable methodology for the project. It is not a question of freezing the building in time, but of conceiving of the intervention as another phase in its stratification. It is a question of defining the forms of contact between what already exists and what is newly added, in such a way that respects the materials, building techniques, significance and character of the existing structure.

ANALYSIS

The gallery in question is one of the cornerstones of the Alhambra, as it was the point of entry to the Nasrid palaces from the palace built by Charles V (Fig. 3). This majestic Renaissance palace was designed in 1530 by Pedro Machuca (1490–1550), a Spanish architect who was trained in Italy under both Raffaello Sanzio and Michelangelo Buonarrotti. Machuca built a linear staircase which linked the ground floor of the Renaissance building to the upper gallery of the western nave of the Court of the Myrtles. This staircase was later demolished and replaced by a similar one, which stands today, on the occasion of a visit by King Philip V in 1729.⁹ Both staircases led to the northern

⁹ Earl Rosenthal, *El Palacio de Carlos V en Granada* (Madrid: Alianza, 1988), pp. 147–148, Spanish translation of his *The Palace of Charles V in Granada* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985).



Fig. 3. Stone arch of Charles V's Palace, interrupting the Nasrid walls.

end of the gallery under discussion, under an arch whose voussoirs still interrupt the rammed earth fabric today, in one of the most interesting interventions in the history of architecture (Fig. 4).

The gallery long ago lost its decoration, if it was ever in fact decorated.¹⁰ Between 1924 and 1925, Leopoldo Torres Balbás carried out restoration works on this space, leaving it more or less in the state it is today.¹¹ In the mid-twentieth century, the gallery and other adjacent

¹⁰ Rosenthal, *El Palacio*, p. 159. According to Leopoldo Torres Balbás, the architect and conservator of the Alhambra between 1923 and 1936, there was no decoration; he spoke of the presence in the timber framework of tie-beams dating from the sixteenth century, among the rest of the roof elements, which were made up of rafters, boards, and other plain and poorly-fashioned beams of recent date.

¹¹ These works involved consolidating the whole framework of the nave; replacing the badly-fashioned pieces and those in a poor state of repair; inserting new double tie-beams in the areas where they were missing; replacing a section of the roof that had been recently and poorly built with a single hip, with a timber framework like the rest; consolidating the whole gable and its corbels on the Court of the Myrtles



Fig. 4. View of the connection between the Palace of Charles V and the Nasrid gallery under investigation, during its restoration.

spaces were converted into exhibition galleries for the Museo Nacional de Arte Hispanomusulmán. In the works undertaken to adapt it to this use, the stairs leading into the Palace of Charles V were closed and covered, and the stairs reconstructed by Torres Balbás were closed off and have remained so until the present time.¹²

The process of stratigraphic analysis on the gallery wall construction commenced with the removal of the various recent surface finishes, in order to replace them with a porous lime cladding that would not affect the conservation of the monument. In addition, important works were

side; reconstructing the old Islamic stairs which connected the ground and first floors; plastering all the interior walls with gypsum; and chipping and cladding the façade of the Court of the Myrtles, whose surface had been re-clad on earlier occasions.

¹² This intervention was characterized in general by its exclusively pragmatic character, for example, inserting niches for showcases, inserting grooves and sockets for electric wiring, and adding skirting boards.

carried out on the roof, where the boards, rafters and beams in poor condition were replaced with new timber. The following section describes the hypothesis developed regarding the sequence which evolved during the construction of the gallery. The study of the fabrics identified three major building periods, each of which comprises a series of different phases (illustrated in Colour Plates 15, 16 and 17).

Period I: 14th–early 15th century (Nasrid period)

The first building period encompasses the construction phase of most of the fabrics in the room, and can be placed between the fourteenth and early fifteenth century. They are walls mostly made of *tapial* (the typical Nasrid construction technique), a small proportion of lime granules, and some courses of reddish brick (measuring $29.5 \times 3.5 \times 14$ cm), bonded with mortar made of red soil and lime granules. In some places, there are remains of the original finished *tapial* surface, identifiable as a smooth surface. The strongly tamped soil adheres to the plank moulding, and when the moulding is removed the *tapial* mass shows the support surface of the timber moulding on its exterior. Most of this finish of the wall in the room under study was missing for reasons of erosion, the passage of time, the removal of plaster cladding, etc., but where it is preserved, it bears witness to the building method used.

This type of fabric is often plastered and rendered with gypsum mortar, which at the present time is rather eroded and slightly chipped. This layer of cladding is thought to belong to the first period because it always seems to adhere to the *tapial* surface, though there are no other elements to date it. The thin layer of lime on top of this cladding, seen especially in the eastern wall, may be the finished surface from the same period, while the superficial layer belongs to later periods.

We can attribute to the same period a series of bays, in both the interior eastern and western walls, because their position *vis-à-vis* the line of the mud walls, in most cases, suggests that they are contemporary with the fabric. This is the case in bays 2, 3, 5, 8, 7, 15, 16, 17 and 18 (see Colour Plates 15 and 16). A series of vertical marks in the walls, which correspond to the position of partitions dividing the spaces, probably also dates from this period. From the traces that can be identified as belonging to the first period, we can hypothesize that this was an architectural space similar to the present one in terms of its dimensions, with a series of windows on both sides, as though it were a long gallery open to the exterior by windows (1.70 m wide and

1.90 m high), along the two long sides. The roof of the space probably consisted of a single hip inclined towards the eastern side of the gallery, towards the Court of the Myrtles.

Period II: 16th–18th century (Hapsburg reign)

The second period comprised three phases, which could either have been different, successive building stages, or different stages within the same programme of works. There are no specific, reliable data for this period, so any hypothesis remains to be confirmed or refuted. This entire period can be placed between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The first significant intervention that can be identified is an attempt to join the Palace of Charles V to the western gallery of the Comares Palace, to be used as part of the imperial palace; the interior rooms in this zone were also refurbished at this time. A series of works on some bays in the western wall of the upper gallery belong to this period. Above all, there were two major interventions: the insertion into the gallery fabric of the arch and window of the Palace of Charles V, which connected the Nasrid and Hapsburg palaces; and the inclusion of a door, possibly attached to the staircase, connecting the gallery to the Comares Palace.

Judging by what can be deduced from direct observation of the walls, we may be able to attribute to this same phase the insertion of the large girder that crosses the south end of the nave, later shortened to insert the door of the museum. The girder seems to have been inserted at the same time as alterations were made to the little room at the southern end of the nave, as the same girder is inserted in a brick fabric apparently different from the brick fabric which characterizes the walls of this little room. Also related with this same period, although at another building stage, is a series of works on the central bays of the western wall, whose dimensions are altered or their positions shifted. The portal in the western façade may have been opened in 1634, on the occasion of the visit of King Philip IV.¹³

¹³ Manuel Gómez-Moreno, *Guía de Granada* (Granada: Imprenta de Indalecio Ventura, 1892; reprinted in 1982), p. 57.

Period III: 19th-century to present day

The third period covers a long stretch of time, from the interventions of the nineteenth century until the present day. This period in turn comprises five building sub-phases. The first sub-phase corresponds to the works carried out between 1826 and 1923, from the first neo-Nasrid restorations carried out by José Contreras, to the arrival at the Alhambra of the architect Leopoldo Torres Balbás. Above all, an important intervention was detected in the eastern wall, which consisted of thickening it by the addition of masonry fabric. According to the findings of our historical investigation, this operation took place in this period, when the single-hipped roof giving on to the Court of the Myrtles was changed into a double-pitched one.

The second sub-phase corresponds to the works performed between 1923 and 1936, when Torres Balbás was the architect in charge of restoration at the Alhambra—the available documentation shows more precisely that Torres Balbás worked on this zone between 1923 and 1929. Many works were carried out on the western bays, including the closure of some of the windows which opened on to the exterior, and in the exterior western façade, as well as several other repairs. These works are well documented in Torres Balbás' Work Diary,¹⁴ so they were easy to locate in the building. The work carried out on the lower part of the walls of the little room at the south end of the nave, where some doors were opened to connect it with the main hall, is believed to belong to this period. The jambs of these doors show in the bonding of their fabric some bricks with a groove at the centre of their upper surface, of a type which used to be employed to channel the water in Islamic baths, and which Torres Balbás himself had specially made in order to leave a recognisable mark of his intervention. In addition, the fabric around the bays is finished with the toothing that Torres Balbás left when he wanted to suggest that the wall originally continued beyond the bay opened up within it. The fabric of the zone in question seems to be a continuation of the fabric around the doors on the ground floor which communicate between the Palace of Charles V and the Court of the Myrtles, and which was made by Torres Balbás.

The third building sub-phase corresponds to the earliest construction of the Alhambra Museum. This project was developed in 1948, and is

¹⁴ "Diario de obras y reparos en la Alhambra 1923–1936", Archivo de la Alhambra L-440. Its content is published in *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* 1–4 (1965–1968).

represented in the plan of 1956 mentioned in Miguel Sorroche Cueva's historical research, conducted as part of this project.¹⁵ The works performed during this phase are reflected above all in the closure of nearly all the bays in the western wall, although some of them had been closed during previous phases. The creation of the entrance into the gallery from the south of the nave, opened to give access to the museum, deserves special mention (bay number 4, in Colour Plate 16).

The fourth sub-phase corresponds to the second phase of building the Museum, which is only documented after 1956. This can be seen particularly in the grooves made in the walls to house electrical wiring and other systems, and the renovation of the interior space with cement rendering, completely covering the walls. The fifth building sub-phase comprised the works performed between 1999 and 2000, involving above all the replacement of the timber roof.

In parallel to the stratigraphic study, the materials in the gallery were classified and, in some cases, their state of conservation was assessed. Previously, other researchers have performed general chemical and petrographic identification of the Alhambra's Nasrid common building materials mainly in the citadel and the palaces, and their findings have been recently published.¹⁶ In this case, new and specific samples were taken in the gallery from the mass of *tapial*, the finished surface, the rests of various former cladding layers, not only of the supposedly Nasrid building materials, but of all the constructional history of this space, in order to begin to understand the changes of the way of building through the history of the Alhambra. X-ray diffractograms (electro-magnetic identification of chemical elements) were performed, polarised light optical microscopy was used on thin sections, and carbonates were determined by Bernard's calcimeter method. All tests were verified in the laboratory of the Departamento de Mineralogía y Petrología at Granada University. The reasons for conducting chemical

¹⁵ Miguel Ángel Sorroche Cuevas, "Estudio histórico-documental", in *Galería Alta de la Nave de Poniente. Patio de los Arrayanes*, unpublished research report, Granada 2000, Archivo de la Alhambra.

¹⁶ María José de la Torre López, *Estudio de los materiales de construcción en la Alhambra* (Granada, 1995); de la Torre López and J. Rodríguez Gordillo, "A study of the wall material in the Alhambra (Granada, Spain)", *Cement and Concrete Research* 26, no. 6 (1996), pp. 825–839; de la Torre López et al., "Estudio mineralógico-petrográfico de los materiales de construcción de la Rauda en la Alhambra", *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* 36 (2000), pp. 167–180.

and petrographic analyses of the samples obtained in the gallery were twofold: the first was to compare the chemical composition of two samples taken from separate locations, in order to assess their possible contemporaneity, and thus complete the data obtained at first sight by the stratigraphic study; the second aim was to classify the building materials of the gallery and, by extension, of the Alhambra.

In the first place, a stratigraphic building analysis permits one to draw up a relative chronology for the architectural example under investigation. Secondly, by comparing this relative sequence with the available historical data, specific periods can be identified and an absolute chronology can be obtained. Thirdly, it is possible to distinguish the building methods of each period, with its concrete solutions, assembly methods, the dimensions of its bricks, type of mortar and aggregate, etc. Finally, the chemical analysis completes this range of possibilities, and allows scholars to characterize the fabrics used at each period by means of the chemical classification of the materials. This methodology has since been followed by the same research team in similar, subsequent projects in other parts of the Alhambra complex.¹⁷

During this study, a database was designed to record the building methods used in the upper gallery of the western nave of the Court of the Myrtles; information was later added to it from similar databases developed during later studies on, for example, the so-called Small Kitchen (Sala de la Cocinilla) in the Court of the Lions, or the so-called Barber's Room (Sala de la Barbería) annexed to the Mexuar,¹⁸ all rooms within the architectural complex of the Alhambra. The systematic recording of these facts regarding building methods and materials will soon provide an enormously valuable database for investigating the history of the Alhambra, making it possible to discover transformations *in situ* rather than relying on the available written documents (kept mainly in the Patronato de la Alhambra archives), which do not often detail the entire history of both the major and minor alterations to the monu-

¹⁷ Camilla Miletto and Fernando Vegas, "Estudio estratigráfico constructivo de la Sala de la Cocinilla en el Patio de los Leones de la Alhambra", unpublished research report, Granada 2002; Miletto and Vegas, "Estudio estratigráfico constructivo de la Sala anexa al Mexuar de la Alhambra", unpublished research report, Granada 2003. The reports referred to here are all deposited in the Archivo de la Alhambra and can be consulted by researchers. We hope to publish more of this research in future issues of *Cuadernos de la Alhambra*.

¹⁸ The Spanish names by which these rooms are now known derive from the functions of these rooms during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

ment. Furthermore, registering and classifying the materials, building techniques and solutions of each stage of the monument's history can facilitate the dating and identification of other fragments of the same monument, or even other buildings in the vicinity. Such databases are therefore starting to supercede the limited number of extant documents as the grounds on which to establish future research in this field.

CONCLUSION

The archaeology of architecture helps scholars to comprehend the history of a building by a direct examination of the walls, supported by a study of the building methods, and by chemical and petrographic analyses that permit the identification, characterization and comparison of samples, in order to discover the temporal relationship between them. The stratigraphic analysis performed on the upper gallery of the western nave of the Court of the Myrtles revealed the constructional evolution of an interesting part of the Alhambra. This methodology allowed us to establish a hypothetical chronology of the different building stages for this site, from the Nasrid use of *tapial* fabrics, through the refurbishment works carried out during the Renaissance, the romantic neo-Nasrid restorations of the nineteenth century, and the conversion of the space into the Museo Nacional de Arte Hispanomusulmán in the twentieth century (Colour Plate 18). We were able to identify the building methods used at each period, and to use this information to create a database, located in the Alhambra, which will form an important resource for future investigations of this monument.

SIXTEENTH-CENTURY VICEREGAL CERAMICS AND THE CREATION OF A MUDÉJAR MYTH IN NEW SPAIN

María Judith Feliciano

Since the turn of the twentieth century, viceregal ceramics have been understood as the quintessential ‘Moorish’ medium, since scholarship presumes a certain purity in the design, typology, and taste for colonial ceramics, which links them directly to the arts of al-Andalus. Nevertheless, they constitute a problematic paragon of Mudejarismo in the Americas.¹ The traditional approach to the study of viceregal ceramics pays little attention to issues of cultural transformation and the development of Iberian and colonial identities and tastes. Scholarship to date has produced a solid tradition of connoisseurship, but has not developed an understanding of the role of ceramics as socio-cultural signifiers in a complex colonial setting. The conventional approach has not placed ceramic wares in the context of viceregal conquest culture, or within wider patterns of conspicuous consumption. This article, therefore, uses the subject of sixteenth-century viceregal ceramics as a heuristic device for cultural analysis.

It is a surprising fact that sixteenth-century colonial ceramics were rarely included in the inventories of well-appointed homes. Rather, the historical documentation reveals a discrepancy between the apparent scarcity of ceramics recorded in private settings, while confirming their presence in the commercial arena. On the other hand, silver services decorated with Renaissance motifs and imported from Europe were routinely mentioned, described, weighed and measured. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Chinese porcelains also appear in greater numbers than earthenwares, although less frequently than silver pieces. The preference for the latest European and East Asian styles in decorative objects stands against commonly-held notions of early colonial taste, which remain tied to a monolithic paradigm of late medieval aesthetics.

¹ ‘Mudéjar’/‘Mudejarismo’ refer to the influence of Andalusí aesthetics upon the arts of Christian Spain, and the artistic styles that were created as a result.

The prominent status of silverware in the inventories implies a discrepancy between modern academic interpretation and the reality of viceregal ceramic consumption during the sixteenth century, as outlined in the archival records. This inconsistency also highlights the artificiality of a Mudéjar category of viceregal consumption that compels an interrogation of the role of Mudejarismo in the development of Iberian identities.² An in-depth examination is particularly important in the case of viceregal ceramics since earthenwares identified as Mudéjar since the nineteenth century are not found in the historical documentation.

Generalized affirmations of the continued existence of Mudéjar wares in New Spain speak of taste as a cultural survival, without addressing aesthetic choice as a meaningful social practice. By repeating the tenets of earlier writers on the subject of viceregal ceramics, recent studies have yet to take the subject of Mudejarismo out of a late medieval Iberian construction and into the wider context of European commodities trade, and the reality of Morisco history in the sixteenth century.³

² For an in-depth analysis of the Mudéjar category in viceregal luxury arts, see María Judith Feliciano Chaves, *Mudejarismo in its Colonial Context: Iberian Cultural Display, Viceregal Luxury Consumption, and the Negotiation of Identities in Sixteenth-Century New Spain*, Ph.D. Dissertation in the History of Art, the University of Pennsylvania, 2004.

³ The extreme example of this approach is the content of the exhibition catalogue *Maiolica Olé*. Though published in 2001, Florence Lister states, “the original draft of this manuscript was prepared in 1975–76. Inasmuch as little archaeological or historical research has been accomplished since then, other than our own work, and few relevant specimens have been added to this collection, we feel the date and observations presented in this publication remain current”. While the repetitive nature of recent publications on the subject of viceregal ceramics make her assertion partly true, her treatment of Iberian ceramics and history, especially of the Mudéjar and Morisco periods, belies the author’s unawareness of important archaeological, not to mention documentary and literary, contributions of the past two decades. Lister reiterated that “during the fifteenth century Christian potteries turned out a wide range of domestic wares... When covered with a thin, tin-opacified glaze and if decorated at all, they bore a band of debased cufic [*sic*] inscriptions... The only special sort of pottery produced by non-Muslims during this period was some *cuerda seca* or *cuenca* tiles and plates”. Yet the archaeological and documentary work of François Amigues, for instance, indicates that between the years 1350 and 1429, the very active Valencian pottery workshops saw a marked increase of Christian potters. Indeed, by the mid-fifteenth century, the distribution and commercialization of Valencian pieces rested almost entirely in the hands of Christian merchants. There is no reason to believe that this trend was exclusive to the Aragonese realm. From a traditional museological perspective, Balbina Martínez Caviro also has expressed her belief in the meaningful participation of Christian potters in the production of Mudéjar ceramics. See François Amigues, “Potiers mudéjares et chrétiens de la région de Valence”, *Archéologie Islamique* 3 (1992), pp. 129–167; Robin Farwell Gavin and Florence Lister, *Maiolica Olé: Spanish and Mexican Decorative Traditions Featuring the Collection of the International Folk Art Museum* (Santa Fé: International Folk

Central to this discussion, therefore, is the acknowledgement that the cultural choices made during the early colonial period responded to issues of socio-political formation in New Spain, in addition to a profusion of contemporary pan-European aesthetic information dictated by market forces, consumer demand, and personal taste. In short, the map of viceregal ceramic consumption during the sixteenth century is far more intricate than the clear-cut boundaries that stylistic analysis suggests.

Where the Mudejarismo question is concerned, the spectre of the clandestine Morisco looms large in the scholarship, implying Mudéjar's exotic flair and its disconnection from the 'purely' Iberian. While the hypothetical involvement of Moriscos in viceregal ceramic production continues to be asserted as an obvious necessity for the manufacture of ceramic wares in sixteenth-century New Spain, the question of consumption remains to be raised. This model renders the real or imaginary Morisco artisans, rather than Iberian or viceregal consumers, solely responsible for setting the rhythms of taste and consumption in both the Iberian Peninsula and the American territories. It also reduces the Iberian settler to a position of passive receptor, or even of unconscious imitator, of a foreign aesthetic that reveals more about its makers than about its users.⁴

Art Foundation, 2001), pp. 14, 21; Balbina Martínez Caviro, *Cerámica Hispanomusulmana Andalusí y Mudéjar* (Madrid: Ediciones El Viso, 1991), p. 128.

⁴ This position is most evident in Robin Farwell Gavin's introductory essay to the exhibition catalogue *Cerámica y Cultura*. The author does not acknowledge the role of the Iberian consumer in the description of the transformation of Iberian ceramics during the sixteenth century, but mentions instead external (foreign) forces that included a "first expulsion of Muslims from Spanish soil, in 1502", the final expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609, the increasing "fervour" for *limpieza de sangre*, the arrival of Italian "merchants, artists, and potters", and the opening of Portuguese maritime trade with Asia. The misrepresentation of the forced conversions of 1501–1502 (Castile) and 1525 (Aragón) as a "first expulsion", and the timely arrival of Italian artisans, presumably to fill the void left by the Moriscos, together with the fact that Gavin does not acknowledge the well-documented role of 'Christian' artisans in the production of 'Islamic art forms', indicate a historical construction intended to support an aesthetic supposition. Nonetheless, Gavin summarizes the importance of these events as follows, "The popular appeal of the Chinese ceramics, the loss of innumerable Islamic artists, and the introduction of Renaissance art combined to transform the appearance of what had been a predominantly Islamic art form into an international one. And from this time forward, ceramic artistic traditions in Spain and Mexico were inexorably linked". See Robin Farwell Gavin, "Introduction" in *Cerámica y Cultura: The Story of Spanish and Mexican Mayolica* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), pp. 5–6.

Although much has been written about the general history of viceregal ceramics, the fact remains that, outside of archaeological sherds, very few sixteenth-century examples survive. Nonetheless, since ceramics (mainly from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) outnumber Mexican silver pieces in museum collections, they have been regarded as the classic example of a surviving and dominating taste for Mudéjar goods among the viceregal ruling classes. The myth of the preeminence of ceramics as sumptuous objects of desire has been created out of the extant examples produced during and after the mid-seventeenth-century 'boom' of the ceramic industry of the central Mexican city of Puebla de los Ángeles (Colour Plate 19A).

An examination of the literature pertaining to Mexican colonial ceramics emphasizes the need for a reassessment of this myth, especially for the sixteenth century, a period that is noticeably absent from modern studies.⁵ Furthermore, a critical interpretation of the scholarship underscores the problematic fact that our understanding of colonial Mexican ceramics currently owes more to the development of museum and private collecting in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, than to the reality of their use and meaning during the viceregal period.⁶ In the records of this period, there is no scarcity of historical documentation with which to corroborate our assessment of the stylistic information. Therefore, it is possible to develop an analysis of the style "as it operated".⁷

By characterizing the value of viceregal ceramics on stylistic criteria alone, scholars have not been able to determine these objects' cultural significance during the early colonial period.⁸ As items of daily use,

⁵ Margaret Connors McQuade's dissertation, *The Making of a Spanish Colonial Tradition: Loza Poblana and its Emergence* (Art History Department, CUNY Graduate Center, 2003), offers much-needed insight into the world of sixteenth-century viceregal ceramic production.

⁶ See Feliciano, *Mudejarismo in its Colonial Context*.

⁷ Or, at the very least, to approximate it: in Jon Muller's words, "it is not possible fully to treat a change in a style without understanding the style as it operated". See Jon Muller, "Style and Culture Contact", in *Man across the Sea. Problems of Pre-Columbian Contacts*, eds. Carroll Riley, J. Charles Kelley, et al. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), pp. 66–78 (p. 76 for this quote). This essay addresses methodological concerns about the use of style alone to trace patterns of cultural exchange. Muller is particularly concerned about the taxonomic approach that allows for the formulation of "diffusionist explanations" (pp. 67–69). In the case of viceregal ceramics, this description can be applied to art historians and archaeologists who do not pause to assess the "inadequacy of the taxonomic procedures employed" (p. 69).

⁸ Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), p. 97.

ceramics were constantly present in the course of viceregal life. Even when their role was solely decorative, their place in the home implied a constant interaction not just with members of the household and its visitors, but also with other surrounding objects, which were subject to similar scrutiny and socio-cultural measures. The meanings extracted from these physical and visual exchanges are essential to expanding our knowledge of the viceregal environment as it was lived.⁹

Baxandall and Geertz have stressed the role of the consumer, or “beholder”, of works of art in identifying and thereby imbuing objects with cultural meaning.¹⁰ For Geertz, such construction and recognition of meaning is inherently the product of local practice: “meaning is use, or more carefully, arises from use”.¹¹ In the colonial dimension of viceregal ceramics, especially during the formative years of the sixteenth century, the local geography of cultural knowledge extended to the Iberian Peninsula. In this context, the use—not to mention the technical knowledge—of glazed ceramics had long transcended socio-religious boundaries to become a pan-Iberian medium. In New Spain, ceramic wares served to propagate Iberian modes and manners. Yet, even as effective diffusers of Iberian cultural hegemony, they still existed in relation to a large quantity of material objects of greater socio-economic value. Though routinely overlooked in the scholarship, it is against this backdrop that consumers derived knowledge, developed taste and, ultimately, positioned ceramic wares.

The established idea upholds the ceramic tradition of the Castilian town of Talavera de la Reina as the model followed by viceregal potters, largely due to its well-documented rise as a major artisanal centre at the end of the sixteenth century. Seville, as the gateway to the Americas and the home of a deep-rooted pottery tradition, is considered to be the second most influential centre for the development of the craft in New Spain. Yet, the map of Iberian ceramic production and consumption throughout the first three quarters of the sixteenth century is tremendously diverse technically and geographically. Extant material

⁹ Or, what Geertz describes as the “way of being-in-the-world” that art “promotes and exemplifies”. Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, p. 97.

¹⁰ Throughout his text, Baxandall calls this process “gauging” (and the resulting phenomenon “the period eye”), while Geertz has interpreted it as “the capacity of [an] audience to see meanings in pictures”. See Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, p. 108.

¹¹ Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, p. 118.

evidence indicates that at least three major pottery centres were active producers in Iberia throughout the sixteenth century. The kilns at Valencia, Toledo and Seville produced ceramic wares that were admired throughout the Peninsula, the Mediterranean, and across the Atlantic. Together, they are of fundamental importance to understanding the stylistic diversity that characterized Iberian production and consumption of material goods. The study of pottery production at these centres is essential to assessing the development of Iberian ceramic taste in New Spain, particularly since new documentary evidence points to the fact that Talavera de la Reina-Puente del Arzobispo did not become a key producer of luxury ceramics until 1580, at the earliest.¹²

A detailed examination of the historical and aesthetic dimensions of each pottery town falls outside of the scope of this investigation. Of direct importance to the present discourse, however, is the fact that studying these most emblematic Iberian pottery centres sheds light on the role of the potter, whether Christian, Mudéjar or Morisco, not only in the process of manufacture but also in the visual consumption of the finished products. A multi-ethnic environment of varying degrees characterized most Iberian workshops. So-called Mudéjar ceramics, in all of their aesthetic variety, emerge as products that Iberian consumers had long understood to be both trademarks of each local production centre, as well as distinctively Iberian objects. Once transferred to or replicated in New Spain, the message of Iberian-ness remained attached to the objects as well as to the daily rituals that they facilitated.

The increasingly limited cultural impact of Moriscos throughout the sixteenth century, the active role of Iberian Christians in the production of works of art traditionally associated with an Andalusí other, and the growing influence of Northern and Italian Renaissance as well as East Asian items of trade towards the last decades of the sixteenth century, no doubt had a real effect on the life of the so-called Mudéjar wares.¹³ But cultural meaning is also forged at the level of use, at the moment when the objects are intentionally desired, sold, acquired, inherited, and

¹² Anthony Ray, *Spanish Pottery, 1248–1898, with a catalogue of the collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 2000), p. 158.

¹³ In spite of obvious cultural, geographic and historical connections, Northern European, Mediterranean and Iberian stylistic sources are still interpreted as disconnected and unfamiliar. Kuwayama, for instance, called these connections “disparate”. In his words, “Colonial Mexican *majolica* has roots in such disparate sources as Islamic, Spanish, and Italian Renaissance pottery making”. See George Kuwayama, *Chinese Ceramics in Colonial Mexico* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1997), p. 23.

even discarded. Fundamental personal and socio-cultural forces inform each of these acts—or, rather, *choices*. Yet, the consideration of these “collectively shared values” and their transformation in the American colonial environment is new to viceregal ceramic studies.¹⁴ At best, the movement of glazed and decorated ceramics has been presented as the product of a simple process of aesthetic transference, disconnected from socio-political exchanges.¹⁵ Fine ceramics must be positioned in relation to the social reality of the urban centres of New Spain, as well as in terms of the wide circulation and intense commodification of Iberian goods through viceregal spaces.¹⁶

For this purpose, the cultural—rather than the material—quality of ceramic wares during the early colonial period remains a crucial issue. Historical sources point to a rather basic value of ceramics as facilitators of Iberian lifestyles in the Americas. With minimal and formulaic descriptions that lacked stylistic information, the language employed in the documents that consistently mention ceramics (mainly shipping logs) makes no explicit visual distinction between the Iberian wares. Instead, the pieces were simply described as “loza” (ceramics), and sometimes more precisely as “loza basta” (coarse wares), “vasos de loza” (ceramic cups) (Fig. 1), “loza blanca y azul hecha en Triana” (Colour Plate 20), and “loza de Valencia” (Colour Plate 19B), among others.¹⁷ In the case of East Asian trade goods, descriptions are limited to the similarly non-specific term “loza de china”. Although there is a dearth of documentation pertaining to the early patterns of consumption of locally-produced wares, the same lack of description applies to

¹⁴ Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value”, in his *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 30.

¹⁵ Disregarding the complexity of colonial cultural formation, and the role of material culture therein, Robert and Florence Lister asserted, “As with most aspects of colonial life, [the ceramics tradition] was a case primarily of resuming an old craft in a new environment for the benefit of migrant Spaniards, not of diffusing it to a new people. In a real sense, it was just a territorial transfer”. See Florence Lister and Robert Lister, *Andalusian ceramics in Spain and New Spain: a cultural register from the third century B.C. to 1700* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987), p. 219.

¹⁶ To quote Appadurai, the flow of ceramics in New Spain was, indeed, “a shifting compromise between socially regulated paths and competitively inspired diversions”: Appadurai, *The Social Life*, p. 17.

¹⁷ Lister and Lister, *Andalusian Ceramics*, pp. 311–318. Inquisition records are equally general when they describe ceramics. For example, “un navichuelo cargado de loza”: see Archivo General de la Nación (hereafter AGN), *Corsarios franceses e ingleses en la Inquisición de la Nueva España (siglo XVI)* (México: UNAM, 1945), p. 205.



Fig. 1. Blue and white plate, apothecary jar (*albarello*), and bowl, Mexico City or Puebla, 1580–1650; the Hispanic Society of America, New York.

the records of the early seventeenth century. For instance, in a business agreement settled in Guadalajara in 1619, the merchants Diego de Cueto Bustamante and Diego de Ramos declared, among the long list of goods that comprised their shared investment, “ten dozen plates from Puebla . . . , five dozen bowls, three dozen brown bowls, and twelve large plates”.¹⁸ That the only descriptions provided in the documentation are the identification of the centres of manufacture and the basic colours of some of the pieces, suggests that merchants associated each place of origin with a general and well-established idea of its aesthetic production.

Such recognition of form and decoration in association with specific pottery production centres does not imply a connection to ethnic or

¹⁸ “... diez docenas de platos de la puebla a seis tomines docena monta siete pesos y medio, sinco docenas de escudillas a seis tomines docena monta tres pesos y seis tomines, tres docenas de escudillas de frailesca dos reales docena monta quatro pesos y medio, doze platos grandes en tres pesos”. “Protocolo de compañía (1619)”, *Libro de Protocolo de Andrés Venegas*, vol. 2, Archivo Histórico de Jalisco, f. 35v.

religious minorities, or to exotic cultural traditions. Following the sixteenth-century purveyors, therefore, this interpretation departs from the premise that so-called Mudéjar objects were nothing but Iberian goods to the viceregal consumers. Certainly, the message conveyed by their presence in viceregal homes was not of a surviving Hispano-Muslim or Mudéjar lifestyle, but rather of an Iberian way of life—one with close ties to the imperial centre and to the distinctive practices that helped to separate its users culturally from the indigenous and mixed-race majority that already surrounded them in New Spain.¹⁹ Regardless of their decorative repertoire and place of origin, viceregal ceramics facilitated a decidedly Iberian cultural practice. Yet, unlike the consumption of silks, silver, gold and carriages, for example, the acquisition of ceramics was not subject to sumptuary legislations. Indeed, anybody who was able to pay for the wares could acquire them.²⁰

Together with their status as unregulated goods, the seemingly conflicting information found in archival documentation—where a wealth of ceramics in commercial and shipping records is offset by an absence of the medium in private sources—relegates ceramics to a rather basic level of consumption. It is inaccurate to speak of viceregal wares as facilitators of a sumptuous lifestyle. They were, nonetheless, essential commodities that evidently travelled without restriction through the geography of New Spain's social spaces. Yet, although viceregal ceramics underwent significant transformations in value and meaning in the colonial environment as carriers of European cultural information and instruments of Iberian lifestyles, their status as commodities was short-lived. Indeed, it ended at the moment of purchase, as their monetary and social value at the time of inheritance—or, in the case of the Inquisition, confiscation—was already so low that, quite simply, they were not worth mentioning.²¹

¹⁹ For a complete discussion of the history of racial mixing during the viceregal period and the development of the *casta* system as an effort in colonial social control, see Ilona Katzew, *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 42–53.

²⁰ There is no evidence at present to suggest specific patterns of consumption and manipulation of ceramic goods by indigenous and mixed-race members of viceregal society.

²¹ Igor Kopitoff's concept of "terminal commoditization" is applicable to the problem of sixteenth-century viceregal ceramics, although their removal from the "exchange sphere" is due to social practice and the circulation of higher-value goods, such as silver, rather than to state regulation. Similarly, the "downward mobility" of ceramic wares in New Spain supports Kopitoff's basic claim that, "the fact that an

The quick evaporation of the viceregal ceramics' exchange value did not strip the medium of its cultural significance, but it does provide essential information to reconsider its position against the wide variety of choices available in New Spain's luxury markets. Nowhere is this more evident than in the comparative study of the place of ceramics in the testamentary practices of viceregal social groups. In this context, the personal choices that have the power to prolong or "deactivate" the life of commodities are expressed boldly.²² By and large, with the exception of Chinese porcelains, ceramics were not included in the inventories of possessions that sixteenth-century viceregal citizens chose to pass on to the next generation. This absence, interpreted in relation to the pieces that, indeed, are found repeatedly in the inheritance records of the period, not only elucidate the position of ceramics in the cultural map of New Spain, but also the place of the objects that outbid their social currency.

Ultimately, these choices—decisions that affected (to whatever extent) the aesthetic environment of at least a generation—reveals New Spain's society as decidedly immersed in sixteenth-century consumption practices. Here, specifically, is where we must position the so-called Mudéjar wares, as nothing other than appropriate, but basic, items of Iberian consumption positioned at the bottom of a great wealth of consumer goods of higher social and economic value. Contrary to the historiographic construction, neither their material nor their technique, decoration, or place of manufacture altered their use and perception.

The testaments of the Peninsular and *criollo* (American-born descendants of Peninsular settlers) citizens of New Spain show tremendous concern for material goods. At the top of the social scale, the contents of Hernán Cortés's properties offer a fascinating account of domestic items of *all* kinds. They are detailed in the documented public offering of some of the household goods of the Sevillian home where he died, the inventory of goods in New Spain completed in 1549, two years after his death, and the record pertaining to the retrieval of Cortés's pawned property from a Florentine lender in Seville. Surprisingly, this great collection of documents relating to a single powerful family still falls short of providing a complete list of belongings across the Marquis's

object is bought or exchanged says nothing about its subsequent status and whether it will remain a commodity or not". See Igor Kopitoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things", in Appadurai ed., *The Social Life of Things*, pp. 75–77.

²² Kopitoff, "The Cultural Biography", p. 76.

estates in Europe and America.²³ Nonetheless, it presents a detailed picture of the remarkable mix of media, sources, and uses of objects of domestic consumption in Spain *and* New Spain.

Ceramic objects are conspicuously absent from Hernán Cortés's estates. For example, Doña Juana de Zúñiga's butler (*repostero*) counted everything from small silver plates to larger silver candelabra—and even silver-embroidered chasubles from the family chapel—in their estate in Cuernavaca, but there is no mention of a single ceramic item in the property.²⁴ In the public offering in Seville, household items ranging from a copper cask, to iron skillet, worn-out wall hangings, bed linens and even a broken weighing scale found buyers over the course of four days.²⁵ Such a list of utilitarian objects, assembled and sold for a small resale value, still left out ceramic wares. A few months after the public offering, Pedro Ramírez de Arellano, Conde de Aguilar, the executor of Cortés's will, recovered a remarkable collection of luxury items that Cortés had pawned three months before his death.²⁶ In exchange for six thousand ducats, the lender Giacomo Boti had received forty-six sumptuous items, mainly silver and gold pieces, as well as devotional objects and furniture. In total, Cortés traded in almost one hundred kilos of precious metals in the shapes of bowls, cups, wine decanters, crucifixes, and even a desk, to name but a few.²⁷

²³ This is due to the fact that the inventory included a select group of properties in and around Cuernavaca, excluding the Marquis's homes in Mexico City, Oaxaca, Jalapa, and other locations throughout Mexico. In addition, the inventory of the main house in Cuernavaca only includes a description of the goods found on the first floor, as Doña Juana de Zúñiga, Cortés's widow, did not allow the royal scribe to enter the private areas of the upper story. Similarly, the public bidding of the Sevillian home is limited to items of lesser value, or those that Martín Cortés did not keep. We do not know what kind of items and how many Martín retained, although José Luis Martínez presumes that he kept furniture, rugs and tapestries. See *Documentos Cortesianos* Vol. IV: 1533–1548, ed. José Luis Martínez (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica-UNAM, 1992), pp. 352, 364–365.

²⁴ Martínez, *Documentos Cortesianos*, pp. 381–382.

²⁵ *Documentos Cortesianos*, pp. 352–357. Cited from Archivo de Protocolos Notariales de Sevilla, Oficio XIV de la Escribanía Pública de Melchor de Portes, año 1548, folios 183–186v.

²⁶ Martínez, *Documentos Cortesianos*, pp. 358–363. Cited from Archivo de Protocolos Notariales de Sevilla, Escribanía Pública XV, de Alonso de Cazalla, libro I de 1549, ff. 274–276v.

²⁷ *Documentos Cortesianos*, p. 358. Martínez notes that no attention was given to the description of the artistic quality of the pieces in question. This, of course, is probably due to the nature of the transaction.

It is improbable that Hernán Cortés's domestic servants habitually helped themselves to silver services. Certainly, there must have been low-grade tableware and utensils available for their use throughout his properties. But it is in opposition—rather than in relation—to silver that the cultural value of viceregal ceramics should be measured. That an old frying-pan lid made of copper was included and sold in the auction of Cortés's Sevillian household, where not a single ceramic item was offered, speaks of a hierarchy of goods and materials that placed earthenwares at the very bottom. It seems evident that at the highest echelons of viceregal society, as represented by the Cortés family, viceregal ceramics existed outside the course of daily life.²⁸

The same model rings true in the case of less aristocratic viceregal households. For instance, the comparatively modest inventory of Beatriz Ruiz's belongings (1589) describes a comfortable lifestyle, surrounded by decorative objects of many kinds.²⁹ While it is particularly rich in textiles and attire—though relatively poor in silver and gold, hinting at a less privileged background—it still lacks a description of fine ceramics.³⁰ In 1545, the Holy Office completed an inventory of household goods sequestered from Inés del Castillo's humble home in Mexico City.³¹ The list includes two gold rings, two letter holders, a small confessional, a gold cross, and even a sword and a helmet, but no ceramics.³² In 1573, the Inquisitor General Pedro Moya de Contreras sent a messenger to Taxco, with an assignment to retrieve and sell in public auction the property of Guillermo Colina, recently imprisoned in Mexico City.³³ The relatively short list of Colina's material possessions included a horse, equestrian equipment, a complete wardrobe,

²⁸ When his heir Martín Cortés died in New Spain, the inventory of his estate still lacked a single ceramic item. See *Inventario de los bienes de Don Martín Cortés* (1589), AGN, Hospital de Jesús, Vol. 260, Exp. 4, ff. 1–29v.

²⁹ *Testamento de Beatriz Ruiz* (1580), AGN, Bienes Nacionales, Vol. 224, Exp. 15, ff. 1r–14r.

³⁰ Beatriz Berdugo's testament of 1593 (the public auction took place in 1594), filed in Mexico City, shows a similar arrangement of material objects. *Testamento de Beatriz Berdugo* (1593), AGN, Bienes Nacionales, Vol. 224, Exp. 11, ff. 1r–11r.

³¹ *Inventario de los bienes que se le secuestraron a Inés del Castillo* (1545), AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 89, Exp. 1, ff. 1r–2r.

³² “yten, dos anillos de oro.../dos porta cartas viejos/un libro de mano que dixo ser confesionario/yten, dixo tiene empeñada una cruz de oro en poder de un tabernero.../una espada y un casco y un sombrero nuevo...”. *Inventario de Inés del Castillo*, f. 1r.

³³ *Sobre los bienes de Guillermo de Colina, preso* (1573), AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 76, Exp. 40, ff. 131r–134v.

an image of the virgin, and a small broom.³⁴ Ceramic objects, once again, are absent from the list of objects that could bring the Holy Office much-needed earnings.

With the exception of a list of specialized woodworking tools, the possessions confiscated from the home and workshop of Adriano Suster, the Flemish altarpiece sculptor (*tallador ensamblador*), does not differ greatly from the items described in the inventories and lists of seized goods, discussed above.³⁵ Yet, at the end of each list of items, the official of the Holy Office wrote succinctly, “nothing else was found in this dwelling that could be inventoried, and so concludes this confiscation...”.³⁶ Surely, a home and an artisanal workshop contained various types of utilitarian wares. The Inquisitorial official, of course, implied that he did not find any other items *of value* in Suster’s properties. These examples repeat a common pattern in the documentation pertaining to Spanish and *criollo* lifestyles in New Spain. They reaffirm the ordinary status of ceramics and underscore their position as items that lacked even a small resale value.

Though of a later date (1622), Juan López de Zárate’s inventory of goods is particularly interesting, for it was compiled not as a part of his testament, but following royal guidelines.³⁷ As a public servant, López de Zárate was required to detail his private property, which included four homes in Mexico City and a country retreat, much silver, some jewels, and furniture. While, predictably, he did not include ceramic objects among his possessions, he detailed two “Morisco rugs”.³⁸

³⁴ “...un cavallo castaño grande.../tiene mas el dicho Casilla del dicho caballo freno y xaquima y espuelas/tiene mas el dicho un espada con sus tiros/item castro alguacil maior de las dichas minas tiene un colchon freçada y almohada y unas calças medias con sus medias de lo mesmo y son acuchilladas con sus tafetanes y una ropilla de paño azul de la tierra y unos çaraguelles de paño pardo ingleses con unas medias de lana y una camisa de ruan nueva y una escobilla y un calçador y una cruz y una imagen de nuestra señora con otras cosas que todo quedo metido en un costal en poder del dicho castro...”. Ibid., f. 133r. Colina’s possessions, as detailed in the inventory, are very similar to an inventory sold in public bidding in Querétaro in 1597. *Almoneda*, Archivo Histórico de Notarías de Querétaro, Notaría 5, ff. 6r–6v.

³⁵ With the exception of a substantial amount of books. See *Secuestro de los bienes de Adriano Suster tallador ensamblador*, AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 8, Exp. 7, ff. 129r–140r.

³⁶ “Y no se halló otra cosa en dicho aposento que poder inventariar y así quedo en este estado el secuestro...”. Ibid., ff. 131r, 132r.

³⁷ As cited in José F. de la Peña, *Oligarquía y Propiedad en Nueva España, 1550–1624* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1983), pp. 239–240 from Archivo General de Indias, Indiferente General, legajo 1848.

³⁸ “yten, una alfombra grande morisca y otra mediana...”. See de la Peña, *Oligarquía y Propiedad*, p. 240.

Here, the enduring taste for this style of woven good compares with the cultural non-entity that ceramic wares had become. But, perhaps more importantly, it is essential to note that López de Zárate's taste for Morisco rugs was not connected to a preference for glazed ceramics, that is, for a 'Morisco aesthetic'. On the contrary, he relegated low-grade household items to a generalized description of unimportant household "odds and ends" (*menudencias*) that highlight the 'not-worth-detailing' aspect of low-value goods.³⁹

References to viceregal ceramics do surface intermittently, although it is important to recognize the significance of imported wares, whether Iberian or East Asian, in these descriptions. For instance, Bernardino Osorio's extraordinary inventory (1582), detailing sumptuous decorative textiles, items of clothing, jewels and furniture, among others, mentions "twelve large plates from Talavera, a piece of Chinese porcelain, two green-glazed pitchers, and a small white pitcher".⁴⁰ Similarly, among the goods counted in Bartolomé Solano's household were "three small, white pitchers, as well as four glazed clay pitchers, and two china plates".⁴¹

The choice to include ceramic and porcelain wares in these inventories provides some evidence of their distribution in the households of viceregal elites. This, in turn, helps to explain the existence of ceramic items in local commercial contexts, sometimes in large amounts. For instance, the inventory completed after Pedro Escobar's death in 1588, included the contents of his store.⁴² Amidst a variety of goods for sale, which ranged from silk textiles to a great amount of soap, the document registers two plates and two bowls of opacified ceramics (*barro blanco*), as well as a glazed (*vidriado*) basin and two small pitchers.⁴³ More notably, in 1564, when Rodrigo de Quesada notarized his commercial debt to three merchants in Mexico City, he acknowledged four hundred and thirty-four pieces of "ceramics from Talavera" (*loza de Talavera*) as part

³⁹ "yten, de omenaje y servicio de menudencias de mi cassa y cocina della...". *Ibid.*, p. 240.

⁴⁰ "ytem, doze platos grandes de talavera/ytem, una porcelana blanca de la china blanca/ytem, dos botes de barro verde/ytem, un jarrito de barro blanco". *Inventario de bienes de Bernardino Osorio*, AGN, Bienes Nacionales, Vol. 224, Exp. 27, s/n.

⁴¹ "yten, tres jarrillos blancos...yten, quatro jarros de barro bedriado...yten, dos platos de la china el uno quebrado un poco el otro sano". *Testamento de Bartolomé Solano* (1584), AGN, Bienes Nacionales, Vol. 224, Exp. 20, ff. 10v–11r.

⁴² *Intestado Pedro Escobar* (1588–90), AGI, Contratación, 231, N. 4, Ramo 13, ff. 3r–15r.

⁴³ "yten, dos platos y dos escudillas de barro blanco...yten, un lebrillo bedriado y dos xarrillos chicos". *Ibid.*, f. 6r.

of the stock for which he owed money.⁴⁴ However, as we have seen, these meagre references are outnumbered by the documents that fully ignore the presence of ceramics in other viceregal spaces.

The testaments of the indigenous communities of sixteenth-century New Spain, like those of the Spanish and *criollo* elites, also demonstrate a consistent pattern of exclusion of ceramic objects from inventoried households.⁴⁵ They also exhibit a direct, though not surprising, relationship between bilingualism (or access to bilingual interpreters), personal wealth, and increasingly hispanized tastes and manners.⁴⁶ Of special interest is the fact that of twenty-two native testaments written in Spanish, ten mention or describe domestic items (utensils, decorative items, furniture, etc.) as part of their inheritance to be sold for profit, or passed to others. Of these, only two testaments mention ceramics: those of Doña María Paredes, a prominent member (*principal*) of the town of Teposcolula (1585); and Don Martín de la Cruz, a neighbour of Santa María Asunción de Tecamachalco (1597).⁴⁷ curiously, both describe only one piece each of porcelain (*loza de China*) rather than any type of Iberian ware. As was the case with the Spanish and *criollo* testaments, Chinese imports, which were very much in vogue at this early stage in the development of the trade route of the Galeón de Manila,⁴⁸ were certainly worth mentioning. Chairs, beds, silverware and

⁴⁴ “primeramente, beynte e una docenas de platos pequenos de barro de talabera en una caja/yten, (...) diez e ocho pares de (...) del dho barro/yten, treynta e siete pares de las dichas (...) yten, diez e siete jarros de barro azul/yten, beynte e quatro jarros de pie y de pla(...) de barro de talabera/yten, catorze jarros grandes de de una xsa de barro de talabera/yten, siete bernegales de barro de talabera/beynte e quatro jarrillos chicos de barro de talabera/yten, beynte e siete platos grandes de barro de talabera”. *Carta de deuda sobre mercaderías* (1564), Archivo Histórico de Notarías de la Ciudad de México, s/n.

⁴⁵ See Constantino Medina Lima, Elsa Leticia Rea López and Teresa Rojas Rabiela, *Vidas y Bienes Olvidados: Testamentos Indígenas Novohispanos*. 3 Vols. (México: CIESAS, 1999).

⁴⁶ Susan Kellog and Matthew Restall offer a comprehensive look at Amerindian testamentary practices from a wide range of perspectives, covering issues of class, gender and socio-economic transformations, to those of land tenure and visual culture. See *Dead Giveaways: Indigenous Testaments of Colonial Mesoamerica and the Andes*, eds. Susan Kellogg and Matthew Restall (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998).

⁴⁷ Medina Lima et al, *Vidas y Bienes*, pp. 135, 157.

⁴⁸ The term used to refer to both the commercial route between the Philippines and Mexico, and the ship which plied this route. Historical works on the Galeón include Fernando Benítez, *El Galeón del Pacífico: Acapulco-Manila, 1565–1815* (Guerrero: Gobierno Constitucional del Estado de Guerrero, 1992); and Jean-Pierre Berthe, *Estudios de Historia de la Nueva España: de Sevilla a Manila* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara and Centre Français d'Études Mexicaines et Centraméricaines, 1994).

items of clothing, especially those made of silk, are much more commonly found in native testaments written in Spanish.⁴⁹ Conversely, of forty-eight indigenous testaments written in Náhuatl, only one, Agustín Tecpanetpetzin's testament of 1592, mentions material goods: two chairs from Michoacán.⁵⁰ In contrast, the chief concern of native testament practices, whether in Spanish or Náhuatl, was the preservation of land, its cultivation, and its profit. This discrepancy is meaningful for it suggests that, at least during the sixteenth century, modes, manners, and the objects that facilitated Iberian lifestyles, remained divided along ethnic lines. It also supports the idea that the use of European glazed ceramics conveyed a clear message of Iberian-ness.

The fact that ceramics were routinely included in commercial shipping logs, but rarely declared in testaments or Inquisitorial proceedings, is only strange *vis-à-vis* the idea of exclusivity granted to decorated ceramics by the art historical tradition of the twentieth century. In reality, it appears that glazed ceramics were common objects of daily use, present in any home that could afford them. Fine ceramics were imported in great numbers *and* actively produced in the colonies, making them ordinary objects that lacked exclusivity. Their decorative repertoire, whether of Mudéjar, Northern Renaissance or Italian inspiration, was relatively inconsequential in the big picture of luxury consumption in New Spain, which favoured other media as valuable investments. In general, however, the modes and manners that warranted the need for silver or ceramic plates, bowls and cups, were embedded with greater cultural meaning among the members of New Spanish society.

⁴⁹ An illustrative example is the detailed and impressive testament of Don Gabriel de Guzmán, *cacique* (chief) of Yanhuítlán. Among other luxurious items, the list details a silver service as follows: "Íten, aclaro que yo tengo por mis bienes una taza voladora de plata dorada con cuatro abolladitas, con un jarro de plata llano, una jarrilla con su tapadera, otra ollita con una asa, un cubilete de plata dorado llano con un bordo, otro cubiletillo de plata dorada con un letrero, seis cucharas de plata acanaladas, otra cuchara con el cabo de montería, otro cubilete de plata alto llano con un romano, otra taza de plata hechura de indios, cuatro cocos negros guarnecidos de plata...". *Testamento de don Gabriel de Guzmán, cacique y gobernador del pueblo y provincia de Yanhuítlán, año de 1591*, cited from AGN, Tierras, Vol. 400, esp. 1, cuad. 2, ff. 55r-60r, in Medina Lima et al., *Vidas y Bienes*, p. 150.

⁵⁰ Medina Lima et al., *Vidas y Bienes*, p. 280.

PART V

MYTH AND MODERNITY:
CONSTRUCTIONS OF AL-ANDALUS

OWEN JONES AND THE ALHAMBRA COURT AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE

Kathryn Ferry

In 1851 a huge iron and glass structure rose in London's Hyde Park to house the 'Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations'. Although it was designed to be temporary, Joseph Paxton's building, known as the Crystal Palace, became one of the most iconic buildings of the nineteenth century. After the Great Exhibition closed, a public company was formed to dismantle and re-erect it at Sydenham on the city's southern fringe. Far less scholarship has been dedicated to this second incarnation, partly because, by the time the Crystal Palace was destroyed by fire in 1936, it was considered a deeply unfashionable survival of the Victorian period. Expensive to maintain and emblematic of a generation from which Modernists sought to distance themselves, this "crinolined bird-cage", as one journalist called it, has long been considered less worthy of academic research than its predecessor.¹ The two enterprises were, however, very different. The Crystal Palace at Sydenham, with its unabashedly didactic mission, developed from the 1851 precedent of global showroom into a space offering educational recreation. Opened by Queen Victoria on 10 June 1854, the new building welcomed members of the public for eighty-two years, compared to the Great Exhibition's temporary existence of just six months. It is important to recognize this fact, because it means that many more people were exposed to Owen Jones's Alhambra Court, over a longer period of time, than would have been the case if, as some historians have mistakenly stated, it had formed part of the original Great Exhibition displays.

¹ P. Morton Shand, "The Crystal Palace as structure and precedent", *The Architectural Review*, LXXXI (February 1937), p. 65. The first detailed study of the Crystal Palace was published in 2004 to accompany an exhibition celebrating the building's one hundred and fiftieth anniversary; see Jan R. Piggott, *Palace of the People: the Crystal Palace at Sydenham 1854–1936* (London: Hurst and Company, 2004). For a full discussion of Jones's role at the Crystal Palace, see Kathryn Ferry, *Awakening a Higher Ambition: the Influence of Travel upon the Early Career of Owen Jones*, Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Cambridge, Department of History of Art, Faculty of Architecture and History of Art, 2004), chapters 7 and 8.

The Alhambra Court was one in a succession of Fine Art Courts designed to provide visitors to the Crystal Palace with a tangible demonstration of the history of art. Whereas the other nine such spaces combined architectural, sculptural and artistic elements from various monuments under broad geographical and stylistic headings, the Alhambra Court was the only space dedicated to a single building.² The prominence given to this Nasrid palace, built by the rulers of Granada during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, is an anomaly only explicable by the participation of Owen Jones (1809–74). No other British architect, perhaps no other architect *per se*, had such a profound acquaintance with the structure and decoration of the Alhambra at this time. During two prolonged residences in Granada, first in 1834 with the French architect Jules Gourey (1803–34) and again in 1837, Jones undertook a detailed survey, which resulted in the publication between 1836 and 1845 of *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra*.³ Writing more than one hundred and fifty years later, Oleg Grabar considered it both “interesting and distressing” that these remained the best available drawings. The most significant modern work on the Alhambra, by Antonio Fernández-Puertas, is also based around Jones and Gourey’s plates, which says a great deal for the magnitude of their achievement.⁴

Jones used his in-depth knowledge of forms of Islamic architecture to render structural devices, such as *muqarnas* vaults, with a greater regard for accuracy than had previously been attempted by a non-Muslim. At the same time he created an extremely colourful space that reflected his personal views about the key role of primary polychromy at the Alhambra. In so doing, he exerted a significant influence on the way his contemporaries conceptualized the original palace. At Sydenham,

² The sequence of the Fine Art Courts was chronological, running through Assyrian, ancient Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Pompeian, Alhambra, Byzantine, Medieval, Renaissance and Italian styles. Jones designed the Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Alhambra Courts, located on the west side of the northern nave. By including the Alhambra Court in this series, Jones was unprecedentedly placing Islamic art on a par with the other great artistic traditions.

³ Jules Gourey and Owen Jones, *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra* (London: The Author, 1836–45), henceforth, *Alhambra*.

⁴ Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra* (London: Allen Lane, 1978) p. 19; Antonio Fernández-Puertas, *The Alhambra from the Ninth Century to Yusuf I (1354). Plates by Owen Jones* (London: Saqi Books, 1997). Plates from Jones’s *Alhambra* are also used to illustrate Marianne Barrucand and Achim Bednorz, *Moorish Architecture in Andalusia* (Cologne: Taschen, 1992).

Jones returned the plans, elevations and sections of his book to three dimensions, in order to reach a larger audience than had previously been possible.

Before visiting Spain in 1834, Jones had travelled in the Middle East, taking a pioneering interest in the forms and construction of Islamic architecture. Much of the nine-month period he spent in Egypt during 1832 and 1833 was dedicated to the study of ancient monuments along the Nile, but he and Goury also made drawings of Mamluk mosques and streetscapes in Cairo. It was surely because of this burgeoning interest in Islamic architecture that the friends chose Istanbul as their next destination. Surviving drawings demonstrate that during their six-month stay, the architects gained privileged access to some of the city's most significant religious monuments, taking pains to delineate their subjects with an accuracy usually reserved for Classical, western buildings.⁵ Jones showed a continuing respect for the architectural traditions of Islam throughout his life but his preference was clearly for the Alhambra. In *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856) he referred to this building as "at the very summit of perfection of Moorish art, as is the Parthenon of Greek art".⁶ His name became so synonymous with the Granadan palace that from an early stage in his career he was known by the sobriquet 'Alhambra Jones'.

His work at the Sydenham Crystal Palace can, therefore, be viewed as an important promotional exercise for Jones's favourite building. Above the main entrance to the Alhambra Court, Jones made his intentions clear by choosing an Arabic inscription from the Hall of the Two Sisters: "Look attentively at my elegance and thou wilt reap a commentary on decoration".⁷ Yet he did not wish his contemporaries to simply copy from the Alhambra. Nor did he wish to institute some kind of Islamic 'revival' to vie with the other foreign and historical styles being resurrected for nineteenth-century consumption. While his generation was

⁵ These drawings are now held in the Word and Image Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Some have been published in Michael Darby, *The Islamic Perspective* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1983).

⁶ Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (London: Day and Son, 1856), p. 66 (hereafter *Grammar*). The page numbers quoted in this article refer to the facsimile edition published by Studio Editions in 1986.

⁷ Owen Jones, *The Alhambra Court in the Crystal Palace* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1854), p. 59 (hereafter *Handbook*). There is no evidence that Jones read Arabic but he employed the Spanish scholar Pascual de Gayangos to make translations of the palace's epigraphic scheme for his *Alhambra*.

suffering from a crisis of confidence in their ability to formulate a distinctive architectural vocabulary, Jones was among the few who spoke out against the fashion for copyism. He argued that any new style must reflect the socio-religious conditions of its time. It was, therefore, inappropriate to adapt the decorative language of a past civilization to the needs of industrialized Britain: "The principles discoverable in the works of the past belong to us; not so the results. It is taking the end for the means".⁸ According to this forward-looking philosophy the Alhambra Court was intended to demonstrate exemplary design principles. It was not intended to act as a three-dimensional pattern book.

Although the Alhambra Court does not survive, there is a great deal of information relating to its construction in the official handbook written by Jones.⁹ Much of the material in this guide was repeated from his earlier publication, *Plans and Elevations*. That visitors were provided with considerable detail about the relationship between the Sydenham reconstruction and the original spaces of the Alhambra, indicates the importance Jones attached to architectural accuracy. The area allocated to each Fine Art Court was such that, even with its unique focus upon one building rather than many, the Alhambra Court had to respond to compromises imposed by the overarching structure of the Crystal Palace in which it was erected. Jones probably worked through numerous permutations before settling on the final layout but a tone of regret persists in his discussion of those features which could not be accommodated.

In its ground plan, the Alhambra Court was laterally subdivided into three areas, with a reconstruction of the Court of the Lions nearest the nave, filling half the space (Figs. 1 and 2). Behind it the Hall of Justice was made up of three interconnecting rooms (Fig. 9). Essentially an enclosed corridor, these spaces led into the Cast Room, Hall of the Abencerrages, and a space called the 'Divan', and also gave access to the northern transept and the neighbouring Roman Court. The architectural components were recreated to an authentic scale but by retaining some original dimensions Jones was forced to change others, thereby altering the dynamics of the space. It was necessary, for example, to omit the pavilions from the Court of the Lions, and reduce almost by half the number of intercolumniations in that area.

⁸ Jones, *Grammar*, p. 9.

⁹ Jones, *Handbook*: see note 7 for publication information.

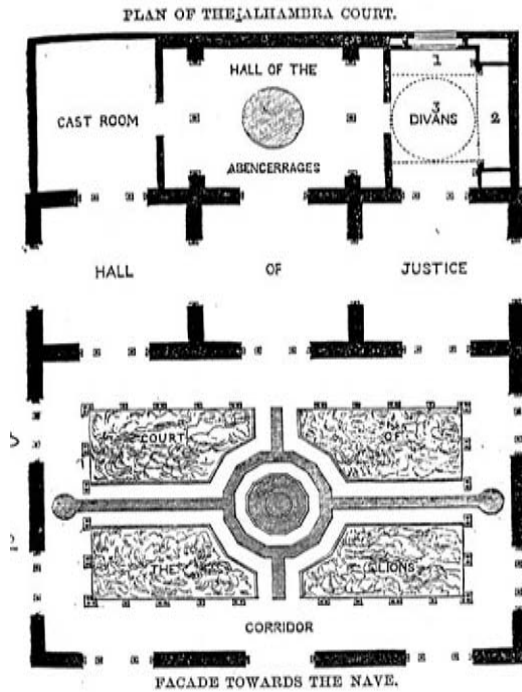


Fig. 1. Plan of the Alhambra Court from Owen Jones, *The Alhambra Court in the Crystal Palace*, 1854, p. 31. By courtesy of Dr J. R. Piggott.



Fig. 2. Nave façade of the Alhambra Court, Crystal Palace. Corporation of London, London Metropolitan Archives.

As a result, the central fountain, sculpted by Raffaele Monti, played a much more dominant role at Sydenham than it did in Granada.

In addition to limited floor space, the presence of a gallery above the Court meant that ceiling heights were restricted. The *muqarnas* vaults in the Hall of Justice had to be omitted, and lower flat ceilings were fitted in their place, which, according to a visitor in 1863, were eventually decorated with replicas of the figurative paintings found in the domed vaults of the original hall.¹⁰ Jones' desire to recreate the Hall of the Two Sisters, complete with its complex *muqarnas* dome, was also hampered by lack of space, and he was forced to settle for the smaller and, as he saw it, less satisfactory Hall of the Abencerrages. Built into and around the iron superstructure (Fig. 2), the dimensions of the Alhambra Court were derived from multiples of the basic unit of eight feet which underpinned the "harmony and proportion" of the Crystal Palace. Pillars and girders impinged upon the reconstruction with the consequence that, as Jones confessed, "we have . . . been driven to *bungles* or imperfect finishings which no Moorish eye could have endured".¹¹ At the expense of his own work, Jones warned visitors against taking his Court as a literal facsimile.

Considering these hindrances to accuracy, it was ironic that the nave façade, the largest and most visible surface of the Alhambra Court, had to be invented by Jones (Fig. 2). The blank red castellated walls of the original monument were not a suitable signpost to attract visitors. Acknowledging the widespread Islamic tradition of reserving decoration for the interior, Jones created a façade that was simultaneously external and internal.¹² Moreover, in composing his design, Jones was able to test his claims of an underlying principle of modular ornament throughout the Alhambra, generating something new, yet complementary, by application of this decorative language. "Many of the ornaments are repeated in the various halls in different positions", he stated, "and yet they always fit the places they occupy; the pattern never is interrupted or broken by any other than a natural division; they always appear made for the particular spot".¹³ A full dissection of the façade

¹⁰ "...on entre dans la *Salle de justice*, décorée de trois curieuses peintures": Alphonse Esquiros, "L'Angleterre et la vie Anglaise, XXI: Le Crystal Palace et les Palais du Peuple", *Revue des Deux Mondes* XLV (May 1863), p. 658.

¹¹ Jones, *Handbook*, pp. 33–34.

¹² The façade was visible on two sides from the nave and the northern transept.

¹³ Jones, *Handbook*, p. 33. Jones compared the use of a fixed rule of proportion at the Alhambra to the descriptions of ancient precedent provided by Vitruvius. Thus

was provided in the handbook, and in order to gain a better sense of the original location of the parts, visitors were directed to study the plates from Jones's *Alhambra* volumes on display in the Cast Room.¹⁴ Crowning the façade was a *muqarnas* cornice from the 'Court of the Mosque' (the small courtyard known today as the Cuarto Dorado). In the upper hollow of this frieze the inscription, cited earlier, was picked out in white letters on a blue ground. Jones then added "a composition required to make up the height and for which no appropriate original ornament could be obtained". The Alhambra's epigraphic scheme was also stressed in the façade by the repetition of the mottos, "There is no conqueror but God", "May power everlasting and imperishable glory be the lot of the owner of this palace".¹⁵

Undoubtedly the most challenging elements of the Alhambra Court were the replica *muqarnas* vaults reproduced on the basis of extremely detailed research undertaken by Jones and Goury. While examples of exotic, oriental-inspired architecture were built in Europe long before the mid-nineteenth century, these architectural fantasies had always employed a highly-stylized form of pastiche *muqarnas*.¹⁶ The faithful reconstruction of this device at the Crystal Palace therefore represented a huge leap forward in understanding one of Islamic architecture's most distinctive features.

Jones and Goury had seen this element in abundance in Cairo and Istanbul. As Oleg Grabar has stressed, however, "the Alhambra is one of the very few monuments in existence which utilized practically all the *muqarnas*'s characteristics".¹⁷ In order to truly come to terms with the structure and ornament of the palace, it was necessary to comprehend the "very curious mathematical construction" of the basic

each part of a building was "a multiple of some simple unit". He ascribed the success of the Crystal Palace to the same principle.

¹⁴ This museum exhibited what Jones termed "our authorities". On the left wall were plaster casts taken in 1837 and on the right examples of ornament repeated in the Alhambra Court. Plates from the *Alhambra* volumes were mounted on the rear wall. Jones, *Handbook*, pp. 86–87.

¹⁵ Jones, *Handbook*, p. 59. It is unclear whether translations of these inscriptions were provided for visitors who did not purchase the official guide.

¹⁶ See Patrick Conner, *Oriental Architecture of the West* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979).

¹⁷ The four characteristic attributes of the *muqarnas* were that: it was three-dimensional and therefore provided volume; it could be used both as an architectonic form and as an applied ornament; it had no intrinsic limits to its mathematical composition; and it was a volume that could be solid or void—a three-dimensional unit which could be resolved into a two-dimensional outline. Grabar, *The Alhambra*, p. 178.

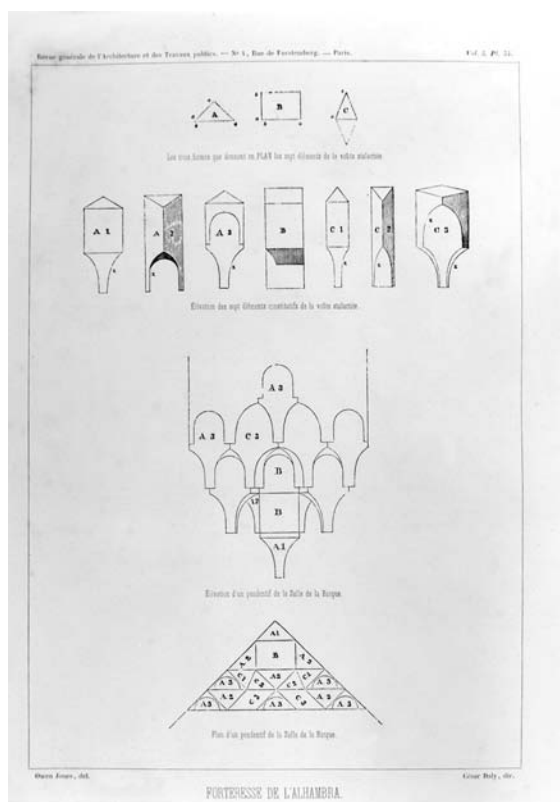


Fig. 3. Owen Jones, “Plan and elevation of a pendentif containing the 7 prisms in combination”.

pendentive form, that was multiplied to produce ornamental cornices, arches, vaults and spectacular ceilings.¹⁸ By minutely deconstructing this device, Jones and Goury revealed the repetition of a surprisingly small number of units (Fig. 3):

...[the *muqarnas*] are composed of numerous prisms of plaster, united by their contiguous lateral surfaces, consisting of seven different forms, proceeding from three primary figures on plan: they are, the right angled triangle (A), the rectangle (B), and the isosceles triangle (C). In these (aa, ab, ac) are equal; (ba) is equal to (bb), and the vertical angle of the isosceles triangle (C) is 45°. The figure (B) has one form in section; the figure (A) has three; and the figure (C) three; the third (C3) being a

¹⁸ Goury and Jones, *Alhambra*, pl. X.

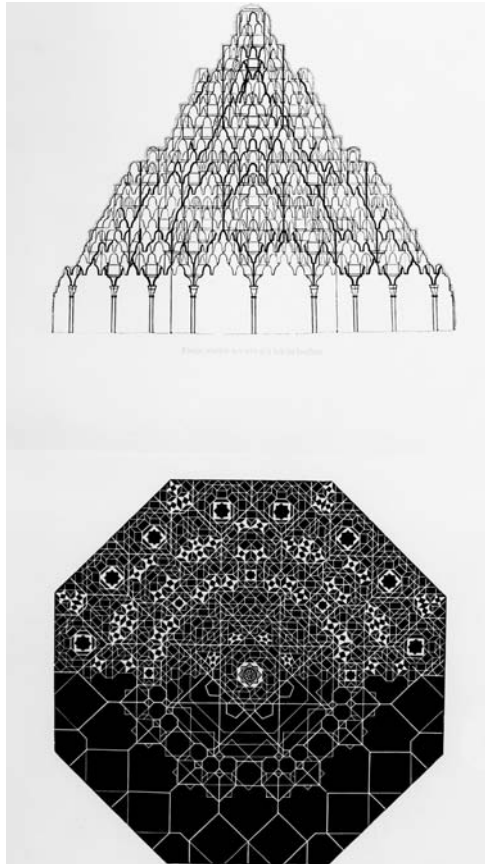


Fig. 4. Owen Jones, Section and plan of *muqarnas* dome, Hall of the Two Sisters.

rhomboid, formed by the double isosceles triangle. The curves (xxx) of the several pieces are similar, by which it will be seen that a piece may be combined with anyone of the others by either of its sides; thus rendering them susceptible of combinations as various as the melodies which may be produced from the seven notes of the musical scale.¹⁹

Reduced to its underlying geometric principles, the depiction of a *muqarnas* dome in plan and section could be realized: even that of the Hall of the Two Sisters which comprised some five thousand individual prisms (Fig. 4).²⁰

¹⁹ Goury and Jones, *Alhambra*, pl. X.

²⁰ Jones and Goury's deconstruction of the *muqarnas* remains the standard explanation.

The achievement was groundbreaking, not least because their published plan actually represented the structure in a way that would have been comprehensible to the original craftsmen who visualized such designs on a single plane.²¹ For centuries, precise information had been transmitted across the Islamic world in this way, but without reference to the finished *muqarnas*, the motif's recreation elsewhere had been impossible, as Deborah Howard has argued in relation to the appropriation of Islamic motifs in Venice: "even if a returning traveller chose to bring a drawing of muqarnas from a Moslem [*sic*] source . . . a Western viewer who had never seen a *muqarnas* would be totally unable to imagine its three-dimensional form, faced by such a drawing".²² Theoretically at least, Jones and Goury had overcome this conceptual problem.

In his reconstruction of the dome of the Hall of the Abencerrages, Jones faced the ultimate challenge of his method. The original intention to follow the painstaking method of building the ceiling brick by brick—as in the original Nasrid palace, where the structure was strengthened by pieces of reed—was rejected after it was decided that "the lesson it would teach could not be seen when completed, and could not be watched during its progress by the public". Demand for accuracy was tempered by pragmatism. Jones gladly embraced the advantages of new technology elsewhere in his reconstruction, and the invention of moulding in gelatine proved to be invaluable for the manufacture of *muqarnas* vaults:

Instead of building them up on the spot, the various combinations have been made on a table with the single stalactite bricks, and the *combination* moulded and fixed up in its place in one large single block; where combinations are many times repeated, the saving in time has been very great. It is difficult to conceive to what extent the Moors would have been led by their vivid imaginations had they been acquainted with gelatine moulds.²³

Invented by Monsieur H. Vincent, the new method had great advantages over the old: "The moulds may be made at small cost, and with

²¹ See Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Topkapı Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995).

²² Deborah Howard, *Venice and the East* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 53–54.

²³ Jones, *Handbook*, p. 86.

great rapidity. That which would occupy five or six days in the modelling may be furnished by this process in half that number of hours".²⁴

Notwithstanding this great time-saving, the Alhambra Court could not be finished in time for the Grand Opening, and a further year elapsed before the Hall of the Abencerrages was finally completed in July 1855. The *Illustrated London News* reported that "the labour required... is enormous; the coved roof alone will require five thousand pieces to be placed separately before the painting and gilding can be commenced".²⁵ Beyond this lay an additional level of complexity: Jones had to explain and demonstrate a form of architecture that was entirely alien to the experience of his craftsmen. In a lecture to the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), Thomas Hayter Lewis, architect of the Arabo-Moorish styled Royal Panopticon, which opened in 1854 in London's Leicester Square, sympathised with Jones:

No one, I think, who has not actually drawn it, or tried to draw it, can have an idea of the intricacy of the pattern and the difficulty of explaining it to others... I think that I am not wrong in saying also, that one of our Fellows [of the RIBA], who has given great attention to the subject, was engaged for two hours, lying on his back, under a portion of this honeycomb work at the Alhambra in Spain, before he could obtain a plan of it in his mind—and that, furthermore, he himself was quite unable to understand that plan the day afterwards.²⁶

Lewis recalled visiting Jones during the construction of the Court, "and he told me that though constantly on the spot and giving personal directions he could not make the plasterers understand the drawings which he made and he was obliged to make models of each bit of work before he could get it done".²⁷ The completed *muqarnas* ceiling appears never to have been photographed, probably because the conditions would have been too dark, and though it survived the fire in 1936 (Fig. 5), it was demolished during clearance of the site.

The visual record of the Alhambra Court suffers from numerous omissions, and most unfortunate is the lack of detailed colour images. Whilst the view of the Court of the Lions shown in Colour Plate 21

²⁴ *The Builder*, VII (10 February 1849), p. 69.

²⁵ *The Illustrated London News* (5 November 1853), p. 383.

²⁶ Caspar Purdon Clarke and Thomas Hayter Lewis, "Persian Architecture and Construction", *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects* (1880–81), pp. 167–168.

²⁷ Caspar Purdon Clarke, "The Tracing Board in Modern Oriental and Medieval Operative Masonry", in G. W. Speth ed., *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum, Transactions of the Lodge Quatuor Coronati*, No. 2076, London VI (Margate, Kent, 1893), p. 106.



Fig. 5. Hall of the Abencerrages, Crystal Palace, after the 1936 fire.
© The Crystal Palace Museum.

hints at the overall impression of blended primary colours, it remains difficult to conceptualize the full impact of Jones's decorative scheme. Nevertheless, it was in this respect that the Court most fundamentally represented the personal vision of its architect. Jones considered the presence of residual colour at the Alhambra so important that during the mid-1830s he pioneered the technique of chromolithography in order to print the coloured plates of his book (Colour Plate 22).²⁸ Throughout this publication, and at his Sydenham Court, Jones depicted a restored version of the Alhambra rather than a direct facsimile of the palace, as it existed in the early nineteenth century. He had become convinced by the evidence for ancient polychromy during

²⁸ See Kathryn Ferry, "Printing the Alhambra: Owen Jones and Chromolithography", *Architectural History* 46 (2003), pp. 175–188; and Ferry, *Awakening a Higher Ambition*, chapter 6.

his student travels, and also added colour to the displays of sculpture in the Greek and Egyptian Courts at the Crystal Palace. His actions there were severely criticized for assaulting the Classical canon, yet his opinions on the colouring of the Alhambra were largely accepted as the standard reference point for that monument. For example, Jones' friend, George Henry Lewes, proclaimed himself "enchanted with the Alhambra", when he visited Spain in 1867: "[it] surpasses all my expectations, though the colouring of the restored portions [is] vastly inferior to that by Owen Jones at Sydenham—there is a crudity in it which almost destroys the charm of the form".²⁹

The attempt to extrapolate an original colour scheme from surviving areas of painted ornament was a crucial element of Jones' *Alhambra* survey. It was based on an extremely unusual analysis of paint scrapings taken from underneath accumulated layers of whitewash. His study led Jones to hypothesize that colour had originally been "laid on with white of egg, and where still seen in the depths of ornaments, it is but slightly changed from the effects of time".³⁰ Well-preserved polychromy was noted in the ornaments of the 'Divan, Court of the Fishpond' (today more commonly known as the Court of the Myrtles), in the Hall of the Two Sisters, and the Hall of Justice, though even in these instances Jones detected the effects of atmospheric damage:

It is true that, at the present day, the grounds of many of the ornaments are found to be in green; in all cases, however, it will be seen, on a minute examination, that the colour originally employed was blue, which, being a metallic colour, has become green from the effects of time. This is proved by the presence of the particles of blue colour, which occur everywhere in the crevices...³¹

A similar reaction was judged to have occurred on surfaces originally gilded, "which can be readily traced everywhere by a green metallic deposit".³² If Jones and Gourey actually published a full survey of extant polychromy in 1834 this no longer exists, and just one plate in their *Plans and Elevations* was devoted to showing the 'Actual State of the Colours'.³³

²⁹ George Henry Lewes, Journal entry 18 February 1867, MS Vault Eliot, Box 39, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

³⁰ Jones, *Handbook*, p. 30.

³¹ Gourey and Jones, *Alhambra*, pl. XXXVIII.

³² Jones, *Handbook*, p. 31.

³³ Gourey and Jones, *Alhambra*, pl. XXXVIII.

Overall, Jones drew very specific conclusions: “The colours employed were, in all cases, the primitive blue, red, and yellow (gold); the secondary colours, purple, green, and orange, occurring only in the mosaic dados, which, being near the eye, formed a point of repose from the more brilliant colouring above”.³⁴ He concluded further that the primaries were applied to the walls of the Alhambra according to “so perfect a system, that any one who will make this a study, can with almost absolute certainty, on being shown for the first time a piece of Moorish ornament in white, define at once the manner in which it was coloured”.³⁵ The spaces of the Alhambra Court were painted according to this system and can be partly visualized by reference to Jones’ published chromolithographs; the strong, flat tones shown in Colour Plate 22 were applied throughout the Court. The French photographer, Philip Henry Delamotte, who recorded the progress of works at Sydenham, captured the Court of the Lions at a particularly interesting point in the addition of colour (Fig. 6). The capitals on the left of this view are seen in various stages of completion and show how, as Jones argued, the decorative treatment gained definition from the employment of colour. The architect, George Aitchison, praised the arrangement of colours in the Court at Sydenham, and noted how “when looked at close the ornament presents an intricate appearance, with gold, blue and white running one into the other; but every different point of view brings out a fresh pattern, and in so extraordinary a manner that when looking from one side to another, we cannot believe that the ornament we are looking at close can have the effect it has at a distance”.³⁶

Jones’ belief in a systematic application of polychromy was predicated on the achievement of this consistent ‘balance of colours’, and led him to propose that marble columns in the Alhambra had originally been gilded. He could offer no substantive evidence of his claims, but considered the perceptual argument a sufficient justification:

³⁴ Goury and Jones, *Alhambra*, pl. XXXVIII.

³⁵ Jones, *Handbook*, p. 45.

³⁶ He continued, “I cannot refrain from expressing my gratitude to Mr. Owen Jones for having given us so lovely an example of colour. The lower chapel at Assisi, the Alhambra Court, and the stained glass of the Duomo of Florence and of Chartres Cathedral, are things which, once seen, can never be forgotten”. George Aitchison, “On Colour as Applied to Architecture”, *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects* (1857–58), p. 52.



Fig. 6. Philip Delamotte, Court of the Lions, 1854. Corporation of London, London Metropolitan Archives.

The colours of blue, red, and gold, are still to be seen on the small capital of the column of the centre window of the Hall of the Ambassadors; but no traces of gold or any other colour have been discovered on the shaft. The same thing occurs in the Court of the Fish-pond and the Court of the Lions, but in each case the harmony of the colouring appears to require that they should be gilt.³⁷

Convinced of the validity of his argument, Jones had the columns of the Alhambra Court gilded. He received some criticism for this choice but his reconstructions undoubtedly affected the way subsequent visitors viewed the actual Alhambra, as is shown by the repetition of his theory of gold columns in later editions of popular texts by Washington Irving and Richard Ford.³⁸ By 1907, however, Albert Calvert considered “it befitting to omit the gilding of the shafts on the many reproductions

³⁷ Gourey and Jones, *Alhambra*, pl. XXXV.

³⁸ See the 1865 edition of Irving's *Alhambra*, and the third edition of Ford's *Handbook for Travellers in Spain and Readers at Home*, published in 1855.

in this volume [of *Moorish Remains in Spain*] from the beautiful coloured plates in the work of Owen Jones". This decision was based upon "the utter absence of any trace of colour on the marble", and the fact that a poem inscribed in the Hall of the Two Sisters referred to "columns which, when struck by the rays of the rising sun, one might fancy, notwithstanding their colossal dimensions, to be so many blocks of pearl".³⁹ Modern scholars concur in this assessment.

In general, the Alhambra Court received far greater praise than criticism. Jones's decision to reproduce the only surviving example of medieval flooring in the palace did, however, prove to be contentious. One critic wrote to the editor of *The Times*, and his letter offers a fascinating glimpse into both the racial diversity of mid-nineteenth-century London, and the way in which Muslim audiences reacted to Jones's Court:

Sir, As I am a Mohammedan, constantly in the habit of visiting the Crystal Palace, I have frequently been much disgusted at the carelessness or ignorance of the artists who designed the Alhambra Court, in permitting the inscription of the holy name of God on the floor of that building. All Moors must cordially disapprove of such wanton desecration of the name which is revered alike by both Christians and Mohammedans. I do not think that those persons who place the sacred name in such a contemptuous position can sincerely adore Him. The Moorish Ambassador, when in England, protested most strongly against this indignity, and his sentiments are coincided by all Mohammedans in London. (Letter from Mr Mohammed Lamate, *The Times*, 11 January 1861)

Jones recognized the peculiarity of finding the exhortation "There is no conqueror but God" in a position where it might consistently be trodden underfoot, but he referred Mr Lamate to his *Handbook* and to the Alhambra itself, "where he will find the originals from which these tiles were copied still on the floor of that building, and where, I believe, they were placed by the Moors themselves. It was my duty to reproduce the fact as I found it" (Letter from Owen Jones to *The Times*, 11 January 1861).⁴⁰

³⁹ Calvert did, however, accept the overall vision of Jones's primary coloured restorations. See Albert F. Calvert, *Moorish Remains in Spain: The Alhambra* (London: John Lane, 1907), p. lv. The English translation of this verse appeared in the commentary to pl. XV in the *Alhambra*, though Jones made no reference to its apparent implications for his theory.

⁴⁰ Jones also suggested that the existence of sculpted lions and figurative paintings might show a less strict observance of Quranic injunctions among the Muslims of Spain; *Handbook*, p. 83.

It is impossible to say what associations were conjured for Muslim visitors like Mohammed Lamate, but the space appears to have engendered a stronger feeling of Romantic ‘otherness’ than was generally the case among the historical or continental Courts. The journalist, George Augustus Sala, an early Director of the Crystal Palace Company, recollected an eastern dinner party he had attended in the Alhambra Court: “We squatted on our hams *à la Turc* round the Fountain of the Lions, and the bill of fare comprised pillafs and kibabs, which we pretended to like and didn’t”.⁴¹ This gathering was a distinctly male affair, but other descriptions of the Alhambra Court explicitly evoked the mythic idea of an eastern harem. A report for the *Illustrated Times* described the Hall of the Abencerrages “filled with ladies”:

They were seated on the red cushions at the side and were gazing up at the wonderful roof, with its small round windows of stained glass, flooding the gilt mouldings with purple, crimson and yellow rays, until the dome seemed one crumpled mass of jewels... One of them whispered in a luxurious mellow voice, that “she could stop a week in this beautiful abode”... Although the little palace was not made for her, she looks as if she was made for the little palace...⁴²

Samuel Leigh Sotheby, an ardent pamphleteer and shareholder in the Crystal Palace Company, was less appreciative.⁴³ His admiration of the Alhambra Court was such that he felt its beauty was spoilt by the presence of visitors and in a bizarre suggestion to preserve its “freshness” and “overwhelming brilliancy”, he proposed that “the ‘Court of Lions’ *itself* should be enclosed with the most transparent British glass that can be procured”. Inside, he wished to see “Groups of Figures (in their due proportion to the height of the original building) at separate parts of the *Interior* of the Court, each group chronologically displaying the Costume and Habits of those who were supposed to be the frequenters of the place from the earliest period, to those who, at the present period, tread its pavements”. Visitors would be reduced to peering in through the Court’s numerous entrances, but the ‘harem’ would be made both permanent and ethnographical. The fact that the entire

⁴¹ George Augustus Sala, *London Up to Date* (London: A. & C. Black, 1894), pp. 156–157.

⁴² The *Illustrated Times* (28 June 1856), p. 466. My thanks to Dr. Jan Piggott for this reference.

⁴³ Samuel Leigh Sotheby, *A Few Words by way of a Letter Addressed to the Shareholders of the Crystal Palace Company* (London: John Russell Smith, 1855), pp. 25–27.



Fig. 7. Interior view looking from Hall of Justice into Court of the Lions, early 20th-century postcard. Author's collection.

Alhambra Court already sat within the glass box of the Crystal Palace seemed to escape Sotheby, as did the real purpose of the space.

Differing responses from the visiting public were to be expected, but in order to assess the significance of Jones's Alhambra Court it is worth considering what it was he wished to offer his audience. His desire to accurately render some of the most ornate and important spaces of the Alhambra was necessarily constrained by the location of the reconstruction. And yet, where he was able, Jones went to quite extraordinary lengths to replicate features, most specifically the numerous *muqarnas* vaults and arches, as precisely as possible (Fig. 7). This new level of exactitude in representing an Islamic monument was subject, however, to Jones's theories of the link between primary colours and primary civilizations. For him, the evidence for a red, blue and gold colour scheme at the Alhambra marked that building as a work of the highest artistic achievement. If nineteenth-century architects were to equal such heights, Jones reasoned that they too must employ these strong, pure tones. His restoration of the primary colours at Sydenham therefore carried a significant proselytizing element. Jones clearly wished to accustom his contemporaries to a greater degree of architectural polychromy than they were used to.

Whilst this was a message for visitors of all social classes, Jones's decision against building the sort of museum piece Sotheby argued for seems to have been made with the less wealthy visitor in mind. For the many thousands of people who lacked the financial resources to ever experience the halls of the real Alhambra, he offered an opportunity to marvel at the beauty of Nasrid architecture and ornament at close quarters. It is clear that visitors to the Crystal Palace Court *did* respond to the Romantic associations of the space in a similar way to tourists visiting the actual monument. Whether or not the Alhambra Court stimulated a greater appreciation and respect for Islamic architecture in the viewing public, it represented a huge achievement, one in which Jones successfully mediated between two different traditions of construction. After the Court was partially destroyed by fire on 30 December 1866, it was rebuilt, unlike the rest of the northern transept, with the assistance of grants from Sultan 'Abd al-'Azīz of Turkey and the Egyptian Viceroy, Ismā'īl Pasha.⁴⁴ For the next seventy years, Owen Jones's Alhambra Court at the Crystal Palace continued to provide a more accurate and easily-accessible representation of an Islamic monument than was available anywhere else outside the Muslim world.

⁴⁴ 'Abd al-'Azīz donated £1,000 to the restoration fund, and Ismā'īl Pasha, for whom Jones designed a suite of rooms for a new palace at Gezira in 1864, donated £500: *The Crystal Palace Sydenham to be Sold by Auction on Tuesday 28 November 1911 by Knight, Frank and Rutley*, facsimile of sale catalogue (London: Crystal Palace Foundation, 2002), p. 21.

VISIONS OF AL-ANDALUS IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY SPANISH MOSQUE ARCHITECTURE

Jennifer Roberson

From the very earliest period of the Islamic empire, Muslim rulers commissioned mosques as a way to establish their authority and create a visual manifestation of the presence of Islam. The mosque became an integral aspect of the community's identity as it served as its physical and spiritual centre. Today, as Islam continues to spread beyond its historical borders, the mosque has become an important emblem of identity for Muslim minorities in foreign lands. In the last fifty years especially, mosques and Islamic centres have been constructed in many cities outside the traditional Islamic world, which has created new challenges for architects and mosque patrons.¹ The form and decoration of the mosque can convey information about the community that uses the mosque, and about the particular path within Islam which they follow. The image that is projected by a mosque's architecture therefore poses important questions: for example, to what extent should buildings of the past serve as models? In cities where the Muslim community is composed of diverse origins, whose past should be evoked? How appropriate are new architectural styles? How do contemporary architectural discourses inform mosque design? For instance, does the use of contemporary design change the image of Islam projected by the mosque?

This article aims to examine such questions, by focusing specifically on mosques in Spain, which is unique among the countries outside the Islamic world for having an Islamic history of over seven hundred years. The country's Islamic past, bracketed by the conquest of the Peninsula in 711 and the end of Nasrid rule in 1492, and thereafter the imposition of Catholicism as the predominant religion, creates a rather different context for the foundation of contemporary mosques than is the case for countries in Europe and the Americas, where Islam has

¹ Throughout this article, I use the phrase "traditional Islamic world" to refer to parts of the world where Islam became the predominant religion, or the religion of the rulers, in the seventh to ninth centuries. By the phrase "Islamic world", I refer to countries in which Islam is the majority religion today.

not played an overt historical role. Studies carried out in other regions outside the Islamic world, by Jerrilynn Dodds for example,² do suggest parallels for how Muslims view their mosques. In particular, the emphasis on the services, activities, and sense of community that is fostered by the mosque over the actual physical structure, is evident in Spain, as in New York. However, monuments such as the Great Mosque of Córdoba and the palaces of the Alhambra are important symbols of the grandeur of Islam in Spain and continue to be relevant today to those constructing mosques. In considering the meanings which can be attached to formal issues of architecture—architectural language, decoration, and relationship to urban surroundings especially—this article will explore the mosques of twentieth-century Spain, concentrating on three mosques constructed in Spain since 1980.³

Under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, from 1936 to 1975, Catholicism was still the official state religion. But during the past twenty-five years, Spain has experienced a resurgence of Islam, as Muslims from the traditional Islamic world have settled there, and Spaniards have converted to Islam. The religion began to be firmly re-established in Spain in the 1960s, with the arrival of Muslim immigrants and students, especially from the Middle East. The changing religious and political climate, brought about by events such as the Second Vatican Council and its declaration of religious freedom, led to the 1967 *Ley de Libertad Religiosa*. While Catholicism remained the official state religion, other religious groups were officially recognized.⁴ Shortly after, in 1971, the *Asociación Musulmana de España* became the first Muslim association in peninsular Spain to be registered with the Ministry of Justice.⁵ Following Franco's death in 1975, and the development in 1978 of a new Constitution declaring that Spain had no state religion, Spain's Muslim communities began to grow more rapidly. In less than two

² See Jerrilynn Dodds, *New York Masjid: The Mosques of New York* (New York: Powerhouse Books, 2002).

³ See also Jennifer Roberson, *The Mosque: Community and Identity in late 20th-Century Morocco and Spain*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of Art History, University of Minnesota, 2004. Further information can be found there on the interviews cited here.

⁴ Jordi Moreras, *Musulmanes en Barcelona: Espacios y Dinámicas Comunitarias* (Barcelona: CIDOB Ediciones, 1999), pp. 88–89.

⁵ Muslim associations already existed in Ceuta and Melilla, the Spanish territories on the north coast of Morocco: see Moreras, *Musulmanes*, p. 88.

decades, twenty associations had been founded, and by 1998, there were over a hundred.⁶

As a result, Islam has once again become a visible element of Spain's built landscape. Since the religious freedom laws of the 1970s, approximately three hundred mosques and Islamic centres have been established throughout Spain.⁷ While most Muslims in Spain meet and pray in their homes, store-front mosques or other small, private spaces, seven free-standing, purpose-built mosques have been constructed since 1980.⁸ The individuals and associations that have commissioned and supported these mosques include foreign Muslims, naturalized Spanish citizens, and Spanish neo-Muslims (which is how many Spanish converts refer to themselves).⁹

Although the Constitution of 1978 guaranteed religious freedom, Muslims living in Spain nevertheless encountered difficulties. During the Franco era, Catholicism was the only religion taught in public schools, with the consequence that misinformation about other religions was rife; this was fuelled by racial stereotypes, and by a version of Iberian history that cast Muslims as conquerors and aggressors, and Christians as 'reconquistadores' and the restorers of order to Spain.¹⁰ Suspicion

⁶ One hundred and eleven, to be exact: see Moreras, *Musulmanes*, p. 90. For details of the most prominent Islamic associations in Spain, see *Comunidades Islámicas en Europa* ed. Montserrat Abumalham (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1995), and Jacinto Bosch Vila, "The Muslims of Portugal and Spain", *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 7:2 (1986), pp. 69–83.

⁷ The number of centres is difficult to estimate as they form and disappear quickly. The figure of three hundred was given by Dr. Ali Kettani, Rector of the Averroes (Ibn Rushd) International Islamic University in Córdoba, and an important spokesman for Spain's Muslim minority. Interview with the author, 6 July 1999.

⁸ The seven mosques are: the Centro Cultural Islámico de Madrid; the Mezquita Central de Madrid; the Mezquita de Granada; the Mezquita de la Facultad de Estudios Andalusíes en Puebla de Don Fadrique (Granada); the Mezquita del Rey Abdulaziz de Marbella; the Mezquita del Centro Cultural de Suhail de Fuengirola; and the Centro Cultural Islámico en Valencia. An active Ahmadiyah community, commonly considered heterodox by other Muslims, has a centre in Pedro Abad, Córdoba.

⁹ I was often told that many Spanish Muslims do not consider themselves to be converts, rather that when they accept Islam, they are *reverting*. They feel that Islam is an historic part of their identity, which remains strong in their memory. Interview with Dr. Ali Kettani, 6 July 1999.

¹⁰ The way that Spanish history has been recorded and taught since the medieval period is a source of concern for many Spanish Muslims. They contest the idea that Spain was re-conquered by Christian monarchs, arguing that the country was never actually conquered by Muslim forces, rather, that its people converted to Islam willingly. See Ignacio Olagüe, "Los árabes no invadieron jamás España", at <http://www.islamyal-andalus.org/nuevo/olague/prologo.htm>.

towards Islam and Muslims remained. For many modern Spaniards, Islam is associated with the societal consequences of immigration, since the majority of Muslims in Spain are from Morocco, and have arrived through illegal means; they are employed by people looking for cheap labour, have few legal rights, and frequently become involved in crime and drug abuse. A primary concern for mosque clients and communities has been to counter negative views of Islam, and to provide a place where the general public can find accurate information about the religion and the cultures of its followers.

While on numerous occasions I was told that “the architecture is the least important”, and “the activities are what give a mosque meaning”,¹¹ nevertheless Muslims in Spain have employed the forms and styles of historic al-Andalus in the mosques they have built. In this article, I will examine the meanings ascribed to these forms by the mosque communities, and the ways in which the memory of al-Andalus, and structures such as the Great Mosque of Córdoba, have informed the vision of the twentieth-century mosque in Spain among the diverse Muslim communities residing there. Although the mosques are strikingly different in appearance, Spain’s Islamic past is frequently employed as a way to establish a space for Islam within twentieth-century Spain.

CENTRO CULTURAL ISLÁMICO DE MADRID (FIG. 1)

The plan to construct this centre was first formulated in the late 1970s by a group of Muslim ambassadors living in Madrid, who felt that the city’s Muslim population needed a place where they could gather for religious purposes and personal enrichment. At this time there were no purpose-built mosques in Madrid, and Muslims gathered in one another’s homes to worship. The ambassadors proposed the construction of a centre that would provide religious, cultural and social programmes, and create a forum of contact between Muslims and non-Muslims within Spain, partly to counter the negative attitudes towards the Islamic world as a result of the Iranian Revolution and international oil crisis.

The project received high-profile support, not least from the Spanish government: Madrid City Council donated the site on which the

¹¹ Various interviews conducted in 2001–2003. Similar sentiments were expressed by those interviewed by Dodds in New York City: see her *New York Masjid*, for example pp. 29, 65 and 67.



Fig. 1. Centro Cultural Islámico de Madrid (1999).

centre was built (in a developing neighbourhood on the east side of the city overlooking the M-30 highway); funding was secured from the government of Saudi Arabia; and King Juan Carlos attended the inauguration in 1992. It houses a mosque for religious services, which accommodates one thousand people, as well as a *madrasa* where nearly three hundred students complete elementary and high school education and religious instruction. The centre also offers a variety of social activities: photographs and works of art from countries such as Morocco and Saudi Arabia are displayed in small exhibition halls; a café serves Moroccan mint tea and Middle Eastern and North African pastries; a gym provides karate classes and other sports activities; there is a funeral hall, bath-house, bazaar, and information area. Furthermore, the centre offers information about Islam and the traditional Islamic world, providing “cultural tours” for school groups and others. This centre, like other large Islamic centres outside the traditional Islamic world, seems to “fulfill the role of ambassadors of Muslim countries”,¹² and

¹² Renata Holod and Hasan-Uddin Khan, *The Contemporary Mosque: Architects, Clients and Designs since the 1950s* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1997), p. 227.

one centre official agreed that a primary goal was to establish “cultural contacts with Spanish society”.¹³

The building’s multiple functions, together with concerns about how Islam in Europe was viewed, meant that the building had to be carefully planned to ensure that an appropriate visual image was created. Rather than choose an architect outright to design the centre, the patrons held an international competition, sponsored by the Union of International Architects.¹⁴ The competition organizers aimed to draw attention to the unique challenges implicit in designing Islamic architecture in the west. In particular, they hoped that the building would promote a new idiom for mosque construction in Spain, and more generally, around the world. They stated in the design brief that the centre should serve as a bridge between Europe and the Islamic world, while also reflecting Spain’s particular socio-cultural setting, “without veering from the essential concepts of Spanish Islamic architecture”.¹⁵ Exemplary structures listed included the Great Mosque of Córdoba, Madīnat al-Zahrā’, the Alhambra, and the Alcázar of Seville. Finally, the competition guidelines stated that the Centre should show “kinship with the urban surroundings, with [Madrid’s] ‘genius loci’”,¹⁶ suggesting that the clients wanted a building that was rooted in Spain’s own Islamic past while at the same time complementing Madrid’s urban landscape.

An astounding total of four hundred and fifty-five designs were submitted, and an international jury, including such notable architects as Kenzo Tange and Hasan Fathy, was convened to judge them. Proposals ranged from a futuristic approach to a pastiche of domes, towers, and applied decoration. The winning design was prepared by the Polish group Czarny, Zemla and Singer-Zemla, and combined sleek modernist forms, giving it the progressive and positive appearance that the patrons desired, with elements that seemed to capture the spirit of historic Spanish Islamic buildings. The design follows a common element of Spanish Islamic architecture in consisting of a series of rectangular forms

¹³ Interview with Mohamed El Afifi, Director of Public Relations, Centro Cultural Islámico de Madrid, 28 July 1999.

¹⁴ Similar competitions were held for other large centres in Europe, such as the London Central Mosque (1969), and the Islamic Centre and Mosque in Rome (1975). For an overview of such projects in Europe and the United States, see Holod and Khan, *The Contemporary Mosque*.

¹⁵ *Madrid Islamic Cultural Centre Competition* (Paris: Union of International Architects Monograph, 1980), n.p.

¹⁶ *Madrid Islamic Cultural Centre Competition*, n.p.



Fig. 2. Courtyard, Centro Cultural Islámico de Madrid (2002).

arranged around several courtyards, dividing the building into religious, educational, administrative and recreational zones. The exterior has a sleek, modern appearance with virtually no applied decoration, only an occasional blind arch. The building is clad in white marble which acts as a decorative element as it shimmers in the sunlight, and gives it an ever-changing appearance. The jury praised the plain exterior and the introverted nature of the structure, stating, “the exterior reflects the traditional spiritual Spanish Islamic forms...”.¹⁷

The interior of the building contains more overt references to the Islamic architecture of Spain. The primary courtyard at the centre of the building recalls the Alhambra’s Court of the Lions (Fig. 2), but the waterways and elaborate *muqarnas* arches found at the Nasrid palace were reinterpreted rather than copied. The courtyard is defined by columns on all four sides, and is enclosed in glass. Rather than actual arches, the glass was decorated with geometric designs that evoke the form of the Alhambra’s arches. The quadripartite garden arrangement at the Court of the Lions was replaced with a series of circular pools connected by a single waterway. The courtyard effectively recalls a high point in Spanish Islamic architecture without resorting to copying or overt ornamentation.

¹⁷ *Madrid Islamic Cultural Centre Competition*, n.p.



Fig. 3. Mosque interior, Centro Cultural Islámico de Madrid (2002).

While the courtyard evokes the Alhambra, the design of the mosque interior alludes to the Great Mosque of Córdoba (Fig. 3). Again, the new version is not a simple copy but a modern reinterpretation. The alternating pink and black marble columns and the double-tiered arches recall the most distinctive features of the Córdoba Mosque; but the arches, for example, have been reduced to stylized outlines of the traditional Córdoba horseshoe arch. The red and white scheme that is so characteristic of Córdoba has been completely eliminated. Rafael de la Hoz, the Spanish representative on the competition jury, stated that the centre was “a reflection of the fusion of traditional Spanish Islamic architecture with the technology of today”.¹⁸ This evocation

¹⁸ Amelia Castilla, “Madrid contará dentro de dos años con una mezquita junto a la M-30”, *El País*, 12 October 1985.

of celebrated monuments not only acknowledges the Centre's location within Spain but also reminds the visitor that Islam is not foreign but a part of Spain's own history.

Although the centre was designed to provide services for the Muslim community, to cultivate better relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Spaniards, and to create a positive image of Islam, it has received criticism, largely from within the Spanish neo-Muslim community. One area of criticism focuses on the building, its appearance, size, and the buildings materials used. Many stated that the building was unattractive;¹⁹ one interviewee even stated that it looked like "a nuclear plant".²⁰ The luxurious building materials, especially the marble façade, were criticized; many remarked that "a mosque should be a humble place". The root of their dissatisfaction was the great cost of the structure, approximately two billion pesetas. One of the struggles faced by the Spanish Muslim community is finding the financial resources to construct centres around Spain, as well as publish materials about Islam and the Muslim community in Spain. Although the Centro Cultural Islámico provides printed material about Islam to its visitors, many Muslims complained that more money should be devoted to producing these kinds of materials. Others stated, "It would be better to have many small mosques".²¹

The underlying root of many of these concerns stemmed from an uneasiness about the influence of Saudi Islam in Spain. The Saudi government, which funded the project, is actively involved in constructing mosques and centres around the world to support Muslim communities and to promote a positive image of Islam. However, Spanish Muslims are wary of the intentions of the Saudi government, and concerned that Saudi Wahhabism, an ultra-conservative movement within Islam, will be forced on them: "There is great disquiet among Spanish Muslims about the Saudi agenda", explained one interviewee.²² They believe that prominent centres like Madrid's Centro Cultural Islámico function

¹⁹ Various interviews conducted in 2001.

²⁰ Interview on 22 January 2001.

²¹ Interview on 24 April 2001.

²² Interview on 29 January 2001. In addition, several Spanish neo-Muslims spoke about what they called a more "pure form" of Islam, closer to original Islam than that practised in some regions today. One individual explained that although Islam was eliminated from Spain, the positive result is that it is developing again without the problems of traditions that have developed in other Muslim countries over the centuries.

primarily to support Saudi propaganda. One individual stated that “the centre is a poisoned gift”.²³ Its prominent location and frequent interest for the media mean that the Saudi backers have a great degree of control over the official image of Islam that is promoted throughout Spain.

In recent years, changes have occurred at the centre, seemingly in response to some of these concerns. The most visible change is in the striking alterations to the minaret and façade: panels were added in 2000/2001, decorated with intertwining vegetal forms derived from designs found throughout the traditional Islamic world, and transforming the appearance of the exterior (Fig. 4).²⁴ The effect is a building that is more overtly Islamic in appearance, while the motifs are not particularly Spanish in origin. This shift may signal the emergence of a new vision of Islamic identity in Spain. When the centre was first planned, the patrons were concerned that Islam appear progressive and not a relic of the medieval period,²⁵ and chose to root its form in a modernist aesthetic. The new, more decorative exterior suggests that the centre’s administrators now desired an appearance that was more easily recognizable as Muslim. The lack of specific references to Spain’s Islamic artistic tradition is, however, curious. It may suggest that Islam is now more widely accepted in Spain, and that visual symbols of Spain’s Islamic past are no longer required to legitimize the presence of Islam in Spain.²⁶

THE MEZQUITA CENTRAL DE MADRID (FIG. 5)

In contrast, the Mezquita Central (located in the Tetuán neighbourhood, in the northwest of Madrid) was built by a local community, without any official support from either the city of Madrid or the Spanish monarchy. It was commissioned by the Asociación Musulmana de España which, at the time of its formation, consisted largely of naturalized Spanish

²³ Nuria Barrios, “La nueva mezquita en la M-30 inspira recelos en la gran colonia musulmana de la ciudad”, *El País*, 19 August 1992.

²⁴ Other, less visible changes have also occurred: when I first visited the centre in 1999, I was required to wear a robe and headscarf, which were provided at the entrance. By 2002, conservative dress, fully covering arms and legs, was sufficient.

²⁵ Even in 1992, the year the centre was inaugurated, this belief was still prevalent, as seen by the following headline: “La mayoría de los Españoles considera al Islam retrógrado, represor de la mujer y fanático”, *El País*, 9 January 1992.

²⁶ One wonders what impact, if any, the bombings of 11 March 2004 will have on modern mosque design and decoration.



Fig. 4. Centro Cultural Islámico de Madrid with decorative panels (2005).



Fig. 5. Mezquita Central de Madrid (2001).

citizens from countries like Syria and Palestine, who had come to Spain as students and subsequently settled there. During the late 1960s and 1970s, association members met to pray at small prayer chambers inside houses, but in 1980, the association purchased the future site of the Mezquita Central, chosen because of its central location, with easy access to the Metro and a major highway. Originally, association members hoped to renovate an existing building, but when this proved unfeasible, a new building was constructed, which opened in 1988.

In contrast to the Centro Cultural Islámico, which was constructed to be a highly visible symbol of Islam, the Mezquita Central is largely hidden from view. The buildings in this neighbourhood are densely packed, so only the minaret pinpoints its location. The structure is modest, and its dimensions conform to those of the other buildings on the street. Due to the expense of land in Madrid, one of the primary concerns of the association was to take maximum advantage of the space available. The building was divided into two main sections—the mosque, and the cultural centre—divided, from the exterior, by the minaret. The cultural centre comprises four floors which include a halal market, offices, classrooms, a library, and conference halls. The mosque section has a courtyard on the ground floor, above which is the primary prayer chamber, known as the Mezquita de Abu Bakr (Fig. 6), overlooked by the women's mosque, the Mezquita de Aisha. This vertical arrangement, with the courtyard beneath the mosque instead of next to it, seemed the most logical solution to the problem of limited space.²⁷

The importance of the mosque as a place for the community is evident at the Mezquita Central. In addition to services such as school tours and language courses, it acts as a place for the community to gather. “The mosque is a place to meet friends...and to remember Allah”, explained one interviewee.²⁸ Indeed, many congregants commented that the social aspect was more important than the appearance of the building. One member of the planning committee stated that he wanted the centre to be an open place, where non-Muslims felt welcome and at ease: he pointed out that the courtyard beneath the mosque has a

²⁷ Interview with Riay Tatary, President of the Asociación Musulmana, 29 April 2002.

²⁸ Interview conducted on 30 April 2002.



Fig. 6. Mosque interior, Mezquita Central de Madrid (2001).

wide stair that invites passers-by to enter (Fig. 7),²⁹ and this space has become an important area for neighbours to socialize.

Working within a modest budget, and paid for by association members themselves, the building's design and decoration were determined by a committee of association members, in conjunction with the Spanish architect, Juan Mora Urbano, who was chosen because of his work on the Mezquita del Rey Abdulaziz, in the coastal resort town of Marbella, which opened in 1981. While the Marbella mosque is noted for its Mamluk-style minarets and lush garden setting, the Mezquita Central followed a design that related to its location in central Madrid. Association members wanted a centre that would blend with its surroundings,

²⁹ Interview with Riay Tatary, 29 April 2002.



Fig. 7. (a) Stair and (b) courtyard of the Mezquita Central de Madrid (2001).

not appear exotic, and form an integrated part of the neighbourhood. The architect explained, "This building, in which I have tried to give original forms, ought to be of the people, just like the neighbourhood in which it is located".³⁰

While association members wanted a centre that complemented the architecture of the neighbourhood, they also requested that the building include visual references to the legacy of Islam in Spain. The association president, Riay Tatary, explained that the net pattern on the façade was based on the screens commonly placed over windows to filter sunlight, a device used in Andalusí architecture. They allow light into the building while also ensuring privacy, an important element of domestic architecture in the traditional Islamic world. The star motif used on doors and ceilings throughout the building was based on a design typically found in Spanish Islamic art.³¹

Tatary also noted that the dome over the mosque evoked another example of Spanish Islamic architecture (Fig. 6). While mosques with a large central dome are not typical in Spain, Tatary compared the decoration of this dome to those of the eleventh-century Bāb al-Mardūm mosque in Toledo. This small, nine-domed construction served as a neighbourhood rather than a congregational mosque. Tatary described it as "a jewel of art", and thought it an appropriate model for the Mezquita Central, because of its similar local function and its location in central rather than southern Spain.³²

One aspect of the building that deviated from traditional Spanish Islamic forms was the minaret (Fig. 5), which is more akin to Middle Eastern, especially Syrian, models, and undoubtedly due to the fact that many association members were originally from Syria. The importance of Middle Eastern models in defining the centre's design was also mentioned by Tatary, recognising that much of Spain's Islamic architecture originally derived from Syria: as he said, "The Umayyads came from Syria".³³ He stated that many community members felt that the design was not uniquely Spanish Islamic, but that the motifs evoked both their homeland and the land in which they had settled.³⁴

³⁰ Emma Roig, "Desde Madrid se ve La Meca", *El País*, 7 April 1988.

³¹ Interview with Riay Tatary, 29 April 2002.

³² Interview with Riay Tatary, 13 June 2001.

³³ Interview with Riay Tatary, 29 April 2002.

³⁴ Interview with Riay Tatary, 29 April 2002.

As at the Centro Cultural Islámico in Madrid, the forms chosen for the Mezquita Central emphasized a history which legitimized the presence of Islam in Spain. At a time when there was both an increasing curiosity about Islam and the Arab world, as well hostility towards foreigners, the approach was to appear both *madrileño* (from Madrid) and Umayyad (both Spanish and Syrian). It is interesting that while the appearance of the building was explained in this way, the visual references to the Umayyads and to Spain's Islamic past are extremely subtle. Indeed, many of the details Tatary explained as Spanish Islamic could be considered typical of the larger Mediterranean Islamic world. The way in which he spoke about the forms, however, emphasized a design that visually demonstrated Islam as an integral part of Spain's past, and at the same time part of a modern Madrid.

THE MEZQUITA DE GRANADA (FIG. 8)

The two mosques discussed so far were commissioned by Muslims originally from countries outside Spain where Islam is the predominant religion. During the past twenty-five years, Spanish 'neo-Muslims' have also constructed purpose-built mosques, although they have been limited by financial constraints. The Mezquita de Granada (popularly known as the Albaicín Mosque) is the most recent of the two mosques built in Granada by members of the Spanish convert community.³⁵

Today, the Alhambra, just like the Great Mosque of Córdoba, evokes feelings of longing among Muslims for a period which is remembered, perhaps too rosily, as a golden age of art and literature. This nostalgia is more acute for Granada having been the last 'land of Islam' in Spain, and it therefore has a special place in the hearts of the international Muslim community. One Muslim woman from Barcelona explained that in Granada you can "breathe in the atmosphere, the history of Islam... In Barcelona you have to go looking for it".³⁶

Granada's history and associations made it an appealing site for a new mosque. The Sociedad Para el Retorno al Islam en España (the Society for the Return to Islam in Spain), later known as the Comunidad Islámica en España (abbreviated here as CI), which constructed the

³⁵ The other mosque is located in Puebla de Don Fadrique, and is part of a private conference centre.

³⁶ Interview conducted on 26 March 2001.

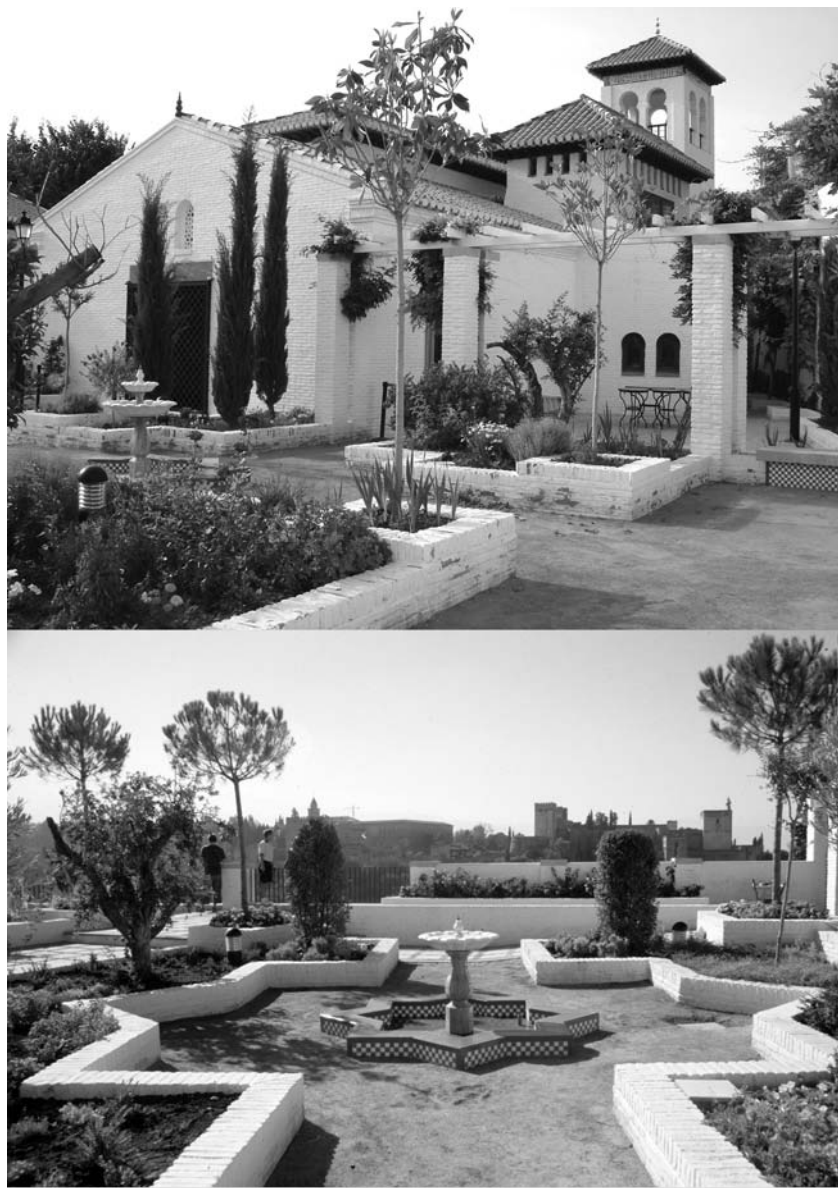


Fig. 8. (a) View of the Mezquita de Granada; (b) View of the Alhambra, taken from the entrance of the Mezquita de Granada, with the mosque gardens in the foreground (2005).

Mezquita de Granada, established themselves in Granada in 1980,³⁷ and were initially received by locals with suspicion. Non-Muslim Granadans were surprised to see fellow Spaniards wearing *jalabas*, the Moroccan traditional dress, and women wearing headscarves. At first, members of CI practised their faith in public, holding prayer meetings and religious festivals in the city's public squares. They abandoned these public acts within a few years, as they antagonised the population of Granada. Despite the reluctance of the local Granadans to accept them, CI was able to demonstrate that their intentions were peaceful; their primary concern was to construct a mosque for their community.

The site of the Mezquita de Granada was purchased in 1981. Its location is extraordinary, at the top of a hill overlooking the Albaicín and facing the Alhambra (Fig. 8). It stands next to the Mirador de San Nicolás, a favourite spot for tourists to view the Alhambra. The community hoped to construct "a clear and unmistakable symbol of the return of Islam to this land".³⁸ Not only would the centre be visible to the many tourists who hiked to San Nicolás to contemplate the Alhambra, but the juxtaposition of the centre with the Alhambra, the quintessential symbol of Islam in Spain, would enhance the symbolic power of the centre, and effectively proclaim the return of Islam.

While the location seemed ideal, it also created problems that delayed construction. People living in the neighbourhood formed an organization to halt the project, stating that there were already too many religious buildings (meaning churches) in the area. They warned that "the presence of a mosque could represent a threat to social peace in the neighbourhood".³⁹ Despite these efforts, the plans were finally approved. However, work was stalled when pre-Roman and Roman remains were uncovered, and rescue excavations were required.⁴⁰

The building was finally inaugurated on 10 July 2003. Muslims from around the world, including ambassadors and government officials, gathered to mark an event which was heralded by attendees and the

³⁷ Its members are associated with the Murabitun, a Sufi group led by Scotsman Abdelqadir Dallas.

³⁸ "La mezquita de Granada, una realidad", *El País Islámico* (June 1998), p. 16.

³⁹ *The New Mosque of Granada* (Granada: The Islamic Community in Spain, n.d.), n.p.

⁴⁰ Juan Enrique Gómez, "La Comunidad Islámica inicia las obras de la mezquita tras cuatro años de paralización", *El Ideal*, 29 January 1998. In addition, CI was required to build a full-scale mock-up of the minaret so its visual effect on the neighbourhood could be judged.

media alike as the return of Islam to al-Andalus, as well as the start of a new age of religious tolerance. At the inauguration, the Lieutenant Mayor of Granada stated, "We are opening the doors of Granada to the Muslim community... We feel happy and grateful for the effort they made and for permitting that Granada be the heart of the Islamic world for a day".⁴¹

The centre was designed for the community by Granada native, Renato Ramírez Sánchez, and is divided into three main sections: the mosque, the cultural centre, and the gardens (Fig. 8). The cultural centre, which has a library, classrooms and conference halls, is located below the mosque, on the side of the hill. Like the Madrid centres discussed earlier, this building was intended to be used by both Muslims and non-Muslims, offering religious services as well as information about Islam and the history of Granada. By locating it next to a major tourist stop, the community clearly hoped to attract the interest of visitors from around the world.

Both the mosque and cultural centre are simple, rectangular structures, constructed of brick, and painted white. The roofs are peaked and topped with typical interlocking Andalusian roof tiles. Exterior decoration is minimal and includes details such as windows in the form of horseshoe arches. The minaret is adorned with a band of Arabic in Kufic calligraphy. Ramírez's design was based on forms that already existed in the Albaicín: indeed, the city authorities imposed many restrictions on his design, in order to preserve the character of the neighbourhood. The mosque and cultural centre almost mimic nearby churches, many of which are also rectangular brick structures, often painted white, with a peaked, tiled roof, while the minaret closely resembles their bell towers. This may seem contradictory, but community members were not displeased; on the contrary, one individual explained, "The churches in the Albaicín are converted mosques", and were therefore considered appropriate architectural models.⁴²

It is significant that the memory of the Albaicín's past played an important role in the conception of this centre and its neighbouring buildings. Many of the Albaicín's churches were indeed built on top of mosque sites, though this was generally in the sixteenth century, in the

⁴¹ *WebIslam*, "Una nueva mezquita para Granada", 14 July 2003, see <http://www.webislam.com/default.asp?idn=465>.

⁴² Interview on 2 May 2001.



Fig. 9. Bell tower of the Church of San José, Granada (2003).

Mudéjar style, and little remains of the original structures. Bell towers, such as that at the Church of San José (Fig. 9), were probably originally minarets.⁴³ But whether these churches truly were converted mosques and retained their original forms does not seem to have been questioned. Rather, the memory of the Albaicín as a Muslim neighbourhood was embraced. The guidelines imposed by the Planning Commission of Granada were therefore deemed acceptable.

While the form and decoration of the mosque's exterior are based on models in the Albaicín, the interior decoration was inspired by a variety of buildings in the traditional Islamic world (Fig. 10). Given its proximity to the Alhambra, one might have expected the decorative programme to evoke Nasrid architectural ornament. However, the interior designer,

⁴³ The tower of the Church of San José was part of a mosque that was constructed between the eighth and tenth centuries, see Antonio Gallego y Burín, *Granada: Guía Artística e Histórica de la Ciudad*, 11th edition, ed. Francisco Javier Gallego Roca (Granada: Editorial Comares, 1996), p. 387.



Fig. 10. Interior of the Mezquita de Granada (2003).

a Spanish Muslim named Sidi Karim Viudes, explained that if you wanted to see miniature versions of the Alhambra you could go to the tea shops in the lower streets of the Albaicín.⁴⁴ He explained that he was not interested in the Alhambresque forms that were popularized in the early twentieth century, and instead strove to develop a scheme that would be meaningful, both Spanish and universal.⁴⁵ The building has “a little of everything..., the only criterion is beauty”.⁴⁶

While CI is composed largely of Spanish converts, Muslims from around the world visit and use the mosque, so Viudes included design details from a broad range of Islamic art traditions. One of the main schemes derives from the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, the earliest extant Islamic monument, and a potent symbol for all Muslims. The *qibla* wall is decorated with pink, green and white marble plaques like those that adorn the ambulatory of the Dome of the Rock. The calligraphic band at the mosque entrance, in which the *shahada*, or Muslim credo, is inscribed, was based on calligraphy from the Topkapı palace in Istanbul, while decorative wooden elements were inspired by

⁴⁴ The section of the Albaicín to which he refers is home to many of Granada's Muslims. One of the first mosques in the city, Al-Taqla, was opened here in about 1980.

⁴⁵ Interview with Karim Viudes, 8 May 2002.

⁴⁶ Interview with Karim Viudes, 8 May 2002.

the Saadian Madrasah Ibn Yūsuf in Marrakesh (built in 1564). This combination of decorative details was intended to appeal to the varied origins of the Muslim community in Granada.

Nevertheless, certain elements are also rooted in the Spanish tradition; in particular, inspiration came from the Great Mosque of Córdoba, as is most evident in the design of the mihrab. As at Córdoba, this is a deep niche with decorative bands articulating its location on the *qibla* wall, but instead of elaborate tile mosaic, the decoration was done with wood and marble. Also, the marble columns that adorn the mihrab are clearly in the caliphal style, but have been reinterpreted for the present day: “They are the 2003 response to the Córdoba models”, Viudes stated.⁴⁷ These references to Córdoba were particularly important, as Viudes sought forms to highlight that CI was an association of indigenous Spaniards. The horseshoe arch, he argued, is not only Spanish but pre-dates the arrival of Islam.⁴⁸ Other historic forms added beauty and a sense of historical continuity.

Finally, to complete the centre according to the requirements of the Granada City Council, the area facing the Alhambra was reserved for gardens. It is hoped that this area, which is open to the public, will become as popular for its stunning views as the Mirador de San Nicolás, just a few feet away. These gardens were required to follow the Arab-Andalusian style that is typical in the Albaicín neighbourhood, which in turn were inspired by the gardens of the Alhambra and Generalife palaces. Again, these gardens have not been preserved in their original state, but were refurbished during the nineteenth century, and probably bear little resemblance to the original gardens. But as with other design details, the popular belief of the historical accuracy of the forms made them acceptable.

At the Albaicín Mosque, Spain’s own Islamic history played a role in shaping the architecture. The interior space features details typical of Spanish monuments, as well as others in the traditional Islamic world. The approach taken for the exterior was more subtle. The building restrictions imposed limitations on the project because of its location, and rather than use applied decoration, which was not permitted, the association emphasized the historically Muslim nature of the neigh-

⁴⁷ Interview with Karim Viudes, 12 May 2003.

⁴⁸ Karim Viudes, “Reflejos del arco de herradura en la conciencia histórica de España” (photocopy, Granada, 1995). Olagüe also argues that the horseshoe arch is not an Arab form: see Olagüe, “Los árabes no invadieron”.

bourhood, as they saw it. Thus, the “clear and unmistakable symbol of Islam” blended with the surrounding environment, reminding viewers that the church towers had once been minarets. Just as many Spanish Muslims feel that they have not converted but re-verted to Islam, so their centre conveys their message of the return of Islam to the Albaicín.

The mosques that have been constructed in Spain during the past twenty-five years have little in common visually. No stylistic details have yet emerged that typify the ‘Spanish mosque’. Nevertheless, the mosques examined here are similar in the ways that they are discussed by the individuals who designed and use them. Each community had specific interests and concerns, based on their particular experiences and places of origin, that shaped the appearance and character of their mosques. However, the desire to construct a mosque that visually blended with the surrounding built landscape was expressed by all. In an environment that can be occasionally hostile, the Muslims in Spain wanted to demonstrate that they were as much a part of the city and country in which they reside as the rest of the population. The ways in which exterior façades have been treated, and sometimes modified, complies with this view.

At the same time, Spain’s particular Islamic past played a significant role in defining the form and decorative details of the mosques. In some cases, such as at the Albaicín Mosque, a nostalgic vision of Spain’s Islamic past was the primary influence. Through historic forms, derived especially from the Great Mosque of Córdoba and the palaces of the Alhambra, these mosques evoke, for their communities, an era which their users see as a golden age of religious tolerance and highly-sophisticated cultural achievements.

These references to Spain’s Islamic past serve as a means to legitimize the presence of Islam in Spain today, and to create spaces for Islam within Spanish society. Although parts of Spain were ruled by Muslims for over seven hundred years, Islam, like Judaism, was suppressed five centuries ago. By including elements of Spain’s own Islamic past in their mosques, these communities illustrate that Islam is not foreign to Spain, but that it forms an integral element of modern Spanish history and culture.

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